** **

9B19M104

Babyonline: Leveraging Cross-Border e-Commerce

Zhangfeng Fei, Kejing Zhang, Xiaokang Zhao, and Ning Su wrote this case solely to provide material for class discussion. The authors do not intend to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a managerial situation. The authors may have disguised certain names and other identifying information to protect confidentiality.

This publication may not be transmitted, photocopied, digitized, or otherwise reproduced in any form or by any means without the permission of the copyright holder. Reproduction of this material is not covered under authorization by any reproduction rights organization. To order copies or request permission to reproduce materials, contact Ivey Publishing, Ivey Business School, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, N6G 0N1; (t) 519.661.3208; (e) cases@ivey.ca; www.iveycases.com. Our goal is to publish materials of the highest quality; submit any errata to publishcases@ivey.ca. i1v2e5y5pubs

Copyright © 2019, Ivey Business School Foundation and Donghua University Version: 2019-11-29

In June 2018, during the hottest days of summer, the wedding dress industry in Huqiu, a district in Suzhou, China, seemed to be entering winter. Suzhou, a manufacturing hub for apparel, produced a variety of garments, but most notably, wedding dresses. However, in June 2018, the local industry was facing “the harshest clampdown” from the local government, requiring all unqualified wedding dress factories to move out within one week.[[1]](#footnote-1) The reorganization of the wedding dress industry had been anticipated, but the speed and force of the initiative were unexpected. Richard Tian, the founder and chief executive officer of Suzhou Beibao E-Commerce Co. Ltd. (Babyonline), was taken off guard by the local government’s actions.

As a seasoned expert in the cross-border e-commerce field, Tian had set up Babyonline in 2012 as an online retailer of wedding dresses, and it had been growing steadily ever since. Although the clampdown would have relatively little effect on Babyonline, changes in the wedding dress industry had become a major topic in the news. Tian worried, however, about related management issues in his company after the implementation of its new make-to-stock system, which involved producing goods before receiving the orders. Babyonline had started using the make-to-stock system at the end of 2015 to lower costs, but the process had recently raised some issues. Specifically, some recent sales had highlighted structural issues with the company’s inventory system, leading some executives to joke that the success or failure of the company rested on the decisions of the sales team. Tian was annoyed by the joke and wondered how best to resolve the inventory problem.

The Establishment of babyonline

Babyonline was established in 2012 as a brand enterprise in the online export business, specializing in wedding dresses and related products. Babyonline’s clientele was spread over more than 200 countries and regions around the world, but it was mainly concentrated in the United States, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and Russia. The company owned the BabyonlineDress brand, which was registered both in China and in the United States. The brand exported more than 200,000 dresses per year, with an annual increase in volume of approximately 50 per cent. Babyonline had also established long-term co-operative relationships with many wholesalers. Since its founding, the company had been growing steadily. The number of employees had increased from 10 to more than 100, the office area had expanded from less than 100 square metres to more than 5,000 square meters, and sales revenue had increased from ¥10 million[[2]](#footnote-2) to ¥100 million (see Exhibits 1 and 2). From 2012 to 2017, Babyonline had secured six consecutive awards as one of the top 10 sellers on the online retail platform DHgate, including as top seller in the wedding dress category. In 2013, Babyonline ranked third in wedding dress sales on Alibaba’s retail platform AliExpress. With more than 1 million fans on Facebook, Babyonline generated millions of dollars in sales each month on Amazon, which extended the company the Global Brand of Tomorrow award in 2017. The company’s vision was to “become the leader in China’s cross-border e-commerce fashion brand!”

Establishment of Babyonline, 2012–2014

In 2012, LightInTheBox (LITB) was the market leader for the online retail of wedding dresses in China. The company grew rapidly and was listed on the New York Stock Exchange as LightInTheBox Holding Co., Ltd. LITB’s success drew great excitement and confidence from numerous bridal product retailers and exporters. Amid a boom in foreign trade and e-commerce at the time, Tian started a new online wedding dress retailer—Babyonline.

Tian held an undergraduate degree in marketing from Donghua University and a master’s degree in business administration from the University of Science and Technology in China. In 2005, Tian had joined the founding team of DHgate, the first platform in China to provide business-to-business online transactions for small and medium-sized businesses. Founded in 2004, DHgate was dedicated to helping Chinese companies enter the global market through cross-border e-commerce platforms. Its mission was to pave a new path for international trade, striving to make online transactions easier, safer, and more efficient.[[3]](#footnote-3) In 2012, citing strategic changes at DHgate, as well as family reasons, Tian resigned from the DHgate management team to found his own company, Babyonline, and began selling customized wedding dresses on DHgate.

At first, fewer than 10 employees worked in the small rented office of less than 100 square metres, on the second floor of a commercial building in the suburbs of Suzhou (see Exhibit 1). The core team included Tian and Annabelle Shen, a key founding partner. Shen held an undergraduate degree in fashion engineering and a master’s degree in International Trade from Donghua University. She then held several positions with foreign companies and private enterprises in data analysis and human resource management before joining Babyonline.

Babyonline sold its products on both DHgate and AliExpress before developing its own website in 2013. With Tian’s experience in cross-border e-commerce, Shen’s background in fashion engineering and international trade, and tremendous effort and enthusiasm from a start-up management team, Babyonline grew quickly from ¥10 million in revenue in the first year to ¥28 million in 2014.

Tian and his team made a conscious decision to sell wedding dresses online across global markets. Tian explained the factors that led to this decision:

Selling wedding dresses was the tide then, and all cross-border e-commerce companies I knew had tried this [selling wedding dresses online] before. Wedding dresses were the number 2 category of cross-border e-commerce, while the number 1 category was information appliances like the 3Cs [computers, communication, and consumer electronics]. So, we took it as our starting product. Between 2012 and 2014, the market growth curve rose nearly vertically, going up dozens of times in that period. At that time, nearly every company had made some money. Fortunately, our company rode the wave of the hot market. Without the rapid development of this industry, Babyonline couldn’t have started up so fast. And to deal in cross-border e-commerce for wedding dresses, it’s necessary to do business in Suzhou. Suzhou commands the complete industrial cluster of wedding dresses. Almost all e-commerce exporters of wedding dresses in China are in Suzhou.

Shen explained further why online retail of wedding dresses was a profitable market segment at the time:

For wedding dresses, the huge price gap between domestic and foreign markets makes Chinese cross-border e-commerce for wedding dresses promising. Besides, the government was also optimistic about cross-border e-commerce, and constantly announced supportive policies, such as legitimizing cross-border e-commerce express delivery, and establishing and improving the tax refund system of cross-border e-commerce.

Expansion on MultiPLE platforms and categorIES, 2014–2015

After 2014, the global export of wedding dresses began to lose some of its original promise. A lack of innovation and an extremely low repurchase rate led many wedding dress exporters to shut down or change focus. However, Babyonline not only was spared from the downturn in the market but also managed to continue growing at a rate of more than 50 per cent annually. From 2012 to 2015, Babyonline was the top wedding dress seller on DHgate and among the top three on AliExpress. Babyonline set up an online shop on Amazon at the end of 2014 and on eBay in 2015 (see Exhibit 3).

Tian explained how Babyonline was able to prosper while many of its competitors had failed:

The whole wedding dress industry expanded very fast from 2012 to 2014, it grew dozens of times and eventually hit the top at the end of 2014. Many sellers who only relied on their official websites to sell goods didn’t get through the industry’s winter. Some were bankrupted; some struggled on the brink of death. But I think it’s just a bottleneck. If you break through the bottleneck, you can continue to grow, or else you are just waiting to die.

Breaking through the market’s bottleneck at the time required focusing on two key issues. First, it was not enough to rely solely on the company’s own website for sales, when third-party platforms were experiencing growing business rates. Second, it was important to understand and manage the wedding dress industry’s two contrasting seasons—high summer season, with multiple rush orders, and low winter season—in addition to a low repurchase rate and minimal innovation.

To address the online sales issue, Babyonline concentrated on third-party platforms, supplemented by its own independent website. Third-party sales generated tens of millions of yuan in sales in 2015, after platform fees. DHgate, AliExpress, and Babyonline’s own website contributed the bulk of sales, at 85.36 per cent, while Amazon generated 11.09 per cent of sales, and other platforms contributed the remaining 3.56 per cent.

To address the seasonality issue, Babyonline broadened its product line to include bridal-related products such as veils, gloves, and accessories. The company’s expanded product line included all wedding-related needs, creating a one-stop shopping experience for consumers of wedding supplies. Total sales increased with high unit levels, making up for a typical low repurchase rate. Babyonline further resolved the seasonality issue by diversifying its dress products to target a younger consumer group.

make-to-order and make-to-stock Business Models, AFTER 2015

By the end of 2015, Babyonline’s main business was custom wedding dresses, which avoided inventory issues. However, relying solely on this business line could be very risky due to low sales in the off-season, lack of innovation, and a low repurchase rate. The problem could further escalate as a result of fierce price wars among Chinese merchants, as Tian explained:

At one time, our company had a dress that could sell well, about US$100, but others (other wedding dress sellers) showed the same dress online with a price tag of US$60, after that we didn’t receive any orders! From this angle, if we hadn’t transformed the business model, we might have shut down earlier!

The company’s transformation took place during a very optimistic market outlook for 2016. As expected, the market for wedding dresses was booming. All products were selling out so fast that some stocked goods were being sold at prices for customized items. Therefore, at the end of 2015, Babyonline decided to introduce a make-to-stock system, although Tian was not very optimistic:

Compared with make-to-order, stock-based sales are just producing a lot of similar products to sell in advance, not really manufactured according to customers’ orders. The make-to-stock system could bring about inventory problems, while make-to-order meant no inventory issues. Furthermore, make-to-order can ensure a more healthy cash flow.

The implementation of the make-to-stock system had not yet shown any major issues with inventory, and customization was not abandoned, although only some designs could be customized. Therefore, the company was benefiting from using both systems.

Strategic Investment, internationalization, localization, AND technology development AFTER 2016

In 2016, Babyonline attracted a strategic investor almost by chance. The company hired an accounting firm for the annual audit in 2016. The firm was so impressed by Babyonline’s operation and management, especially its sound financial standing that it recommended the company to a venture capital firm, which proceeded to invest in Babyonline in 2017. According to Tian, that investment marked a turning point for the company’s development:

The end of 2016 can be seen as a turning point for our company. Before that, we were just a start-up and aimed for survival; that is to say, each deal was made for the sake of revenue for the company. We even hoped every new employee could generate revenue for the company immediately. Now, with this investment, we can take a longer-term view and make strategic plans.

Tian had a vivid military metaphor for the turning point: “Babyonline changed from being just guerrillas to being a professional army!”

However, like any venture capitalist, the firm expected a return on its investment. Shen was aware of pressure from venture capitalists in other companies. She had heard rumours of issues at LITB with multi-category sales being conducted under pressure from outside investors. Multi-category distribution could increase sales but could also lead to higher dispute rates, downgraded customer service, and higher employee turnovers. Shen was pleased about Babyonline’s venture capitalists, who seemed to be purely financial investors who rarely interfered with the company’s operations. Certainly, the venture capital firm still expected to see improvements in Babyonline’s operations and performance. Therefore, in 2017, Babyonline decided to enter the stock market listing process on the Chinese stock exchange Xin San Ban (China’s over-the-counter stock market).

In 2017, Babyonline established a branch office in the United States to gain some insight into the US market. In February 2018, before the Chinese New Year (or Spring Festival), Tian and Shen took a business trip to the United States to visit wedding dress shops, participate in the Las Vegas MAGIC fashion trade show, and negotiate with American dealers for future co-operation opportunities. Tian explained the importance of the US market:

We established a US branch to better localize cross-border e-commerce in the most important foreign market for our company. If we don’t go deeper into this market, we won’t know consumers’ buying motivations or their characteristics. Babyonline might be able to make some money in the short term, but in the long run, there will be problems without in-depth understanding of consumers’ preferences.

Babyonline had been gradually using technology to improve its systems since 2016. The company improved its enterprise resource system and enhanced its warehouse system using intelligent data with great capabilities in inventory management. The new system could process information on 80,000 articles of clothing, ensure that multiple product lines were synchronized and running smoothly, and update information on inventory and delivery.

China’S Cross-border e-Commerce Wedding Dresses Industry

In the previous 40 years, China’s economic reforms and opening up of its economy had seen many achievements in introducing foreign investment, while outgoing investment progress had been remarkable. Cross-border e-commerce, a new model of China’s foreign trade sector, had been developing rapidly. According to research, China’s cross-border e-commerce transaction volume reached ¥8.2 trillion in 2017 and the export of clothing accounted for 9.5 per cent of all exports, which reached a total of ¥6.3 trillion (see Exhibit 4 and Exhibit 5).[[4]](#footnote-4)

Over the previous two decades, China’s cross-border e-commerce industry had evolved over three main stages. Its development could be seen from different perspectives, such as the retail platforms or business models. From the view of the development of retail platforms, stage 1 pertained to the information platform, stage 2 to online trading, and stage 3 to providing comprehensive foreign trade services.[[5]](#footnote-5) From the perspective of business models, stage 2 meant that bulk orders were replacing the smaller individual orders in stage 1 and entering stage 3 meant moving toward global retail.[[6]](#footnote-6)

LITB, the Front-Runner in China’s Wedding Dress E-Commerce Industry

With the development of China’s cross-border e-commerce, the export of wedding dresses had grown to include numerous independent retailers, using both traditional and online sales. The low repurchase rate and complicated customization process still discouraged some sellers, but companies already in business were encouraged by rising sales. LITB, known as the top stock in China’s cross-border e-commerce industry, was the market leader.

LITB was established in 2007 by a team of executives with a wealth of Internet experience, including Guo Quji, a founder of Google China; Wen Xin, the vice-president of Blog China; and Liu Jun, the former president of Joyo. In February 2009, Quji, one of the key founders of LITB, visited the sites of the major wedding dress production bases around the country, including the district of Huqiu, within the city of Suzhou, where numerous wedding dress producers had sprung up in a short time. LITB used ingenuity to make its customized and personalized wedding dresses a popular and profitable product line. In 2009, the price of the average wedding dress in the United States was more than US$1,000, while similar wedding dresses on LITB were selling for only US$200, and only about ¥200 (or US$30) in China, which meant that foreign markets were generating a profit six or seven times higher than the domestic market. The wedding dress segment was instrumental in the development of LITB, although the company also benefited from the rise in the overall economy. LITB sold products in 14 categories, with a total of more than 60,000 items available on its online platforms. However, wedding dresses were still its main commodity in retail, after electronic products, which together accounted for one-third of all retail business.[[7]](#footnote-7)

THE Wedding Dress Industry in Suzhou

In 2010, under the impetus of LITB, the city of Suzhou seized the opportunity to launch a comprehensive reform to reshape the Huqiu district’s wedding dress industry. By 2012, ¥2.7 billion had been invested to build what was known as “Huqiu Wedding Dress City,” over 300,000 square metres of Suzhou, thereby claiming its spot in the Chinese wedding dress market. Chinese wedding dresses were considered the best in the world, and Huqiu wedding dresses were seen as the best in China.[[8]](#footnote-8) In China, Huqiu’s wedding dress industry held a prominent position, accounting for 70 per cent of the country’s primary wholesale market in the wedding dress industry.[[9]](#footnote-9) The international market was also booming, with Suzhou wedding dresses being exported overseas, mainly through online sales to Europe and the United States. However, the export market was threatened by the low quality, small scale, and poor management of some disreputable enterprises.[[10]](#footnote-10)

In May 2018, the local Suzhou government initiated its “331 crackdown,” conducting investigations and rectifications of small workshops and small enterprises that failed to meet production conditions or ignored serious safety hazards. The rectifications resulted in many changes across the Huqiu wedding dress district. The roar of machines disappeared, and small shops were shut down or transferred back to their hometowns. The city of Suzhou made it clear that it did not intend to force the closure of all wedding dress production enterprises; companies that met production conditions could continue their operations. The city’s requirements imposed on the wedding dress companies were strictly based on legal operation and safe production.

The Operation and Management of Babyonline

By the time of the “331 crackdown,” Babyonline had been established for seven years. Its annual sales had risen from US$10 million in its first year to more than $100 million in 2017. Tian and Shen believed that the company’s development had benefited from key strategies in the company’s operations and management.

Multi-Channel Sales Strategy

Starting a business using existing e-commerce platforms was the most convenient and quickest way to enter the wedding dress industry, as Babyonline found. In the beginning, Babyonline depended solely on DHgate to run its cross-border e-commerce business. In the years that followed, however, it gradually expanded its sales channels. The company expanded to a multi-platform sales system, built an official website, and opened a sales office in the US market.

The multi-platform sales system was the key factor in the company’ cross-border e-commerce strategy, as Tian explained:

One key development of our company was our platform strategy. The platform strategy was to open up stores on new platforms continuously. It usually takes us one to two years to become the first category in wedding dresses on a new platform. During its peak period, Babyonline accounted for 15 per cent to 18 per cent of wedding dress sales on DHgate. However, it was difficult to seize more shares. It was impossible to get more sales space from one platform unless we diversified the product line. We had another alternative, and that was to employ more people to open up stores on new platforms. Using this idea, we had online stores on DHgate, AliExpress, our independent sales website, Amazon, and eBay. That was how we expanded to more sales spaces to survive!

Branding Strategy

Another key aspect of Babyonline’s development was its branding strategy, which included establishing its name and presence online, as well as featuring original images of wedding dresses to attract customers. Tian recalled the early stages of the company’s branding strategy during the development of the Chinese cross-border e-commerce wedding dress market:

The huge price gap in the wedding products for the domestic market and international markets gave a massive boost to the development of cross-border e-commerce in China. One important factor that affects sales is the pictures shown online. In the early days, Chinese sellers copied the pictures [featured] on the official websites of foreign brands and pasted them on their online stores. Though it lowers the cost substantially, this is not advisable now because the foreign brands are likely to file complaints against Chinese companies who violate property rights.

Another important aspect of brand strategy and development was related to product pricing, as Shen explained:

Low prices and popular products are frequently used as promotion strategies in e-commerce traditional marketing to generate business traffic. Since joining this industry, Babyonline has been paying keen attention to product quality. We don’t engage in price wars and never sell at the lowest price but focus on selling cost-effective products. In this way, Babyonline developed rapidly to the current scale by selling high price-value ratio of products For future development, Babyonline is dedicated to brand building and cultivating customer loyalty, instead of just focusing on the long-term strategy of low price and popular products.

The communication and promotion of a brand online was inseparable from the images displayed on the website. Using online images to generate actual orders from website visitors was referred to as the image conversion rate. Attaining a high conversion rate, from image to order, was one of the most important challenges cross-border e-commerce companies faced, especially those companies selling wedding dresses, as Shen explained:

Babyonline started to make its own sample designs very early on and employed professional models for pictures of the sample designs. We have set up [in 2018] our own photography studio. Our image conversion rate is now very high, twice that of other companies on Amazon. For e-commerce, high image conversion rate is also an important competitive factor.

Sourcing Strategy with Factories

Babyonline originally decided to work closely with factories that supported its development. In return, the company helped the factories optimize their processes and increase sales. Therefore, the selection of the right factories to work with was very important:

Babyonline’s selection of factories as partners has its own pace. When the business was small, we selected a small factory. When the business grew, we hoped the factories we co-operated with could grow with it. Factories that couldn’t keep up with the pace would be phased out and we would try to find more suitable ones. We hope the factories we co-operate with can guarantee that at least 50 per cent of the production capacity can target our products, and we can have more say in the production. Now, there are two to three factories that produce totally for us and depend on us. At the same time, we guarantee the sales of factories that produce for us. We also remind the factories to keep on reforming according to changes in the market. Take the plant closing in Huqiu as an example. We advised our partner factories to move out of Huqiu early and some of them relocated to inland areas because we anticipated that the government would clamp down on the business sooner or later. For the clothing factories in Chaozhou in Guangdong Province, most of which have not dealt in customized products, we informed them that without customization, their profits would be limited in spite of the quality. Encouraged by our suggestion, some factories in Chaozhou began to produce customized products, combining stock production with customization business.

Babyonline’s partner factories were expected to become increasingly flexible and grow into “super factories,” as Tian explained:

The so-called “super factory” can handle both make-to-stock and make-to-order [production]. We are cultivating such factories with high flexibility, because flexibility can reduce risk. We hope the factories that co-operate with us can be “super factories” with great flexibility!

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNTIES

The make-to-stock system implemented by Babyonline at the end of 2015 resulted in favourable investment returns for the company, but it also created an issue with inventory. Tian and Shen had different opinions on how to define and address the inventory issue.

Tian saw the issue as being closely related to the company’s transformation from a sales-driven enterprise to a supply-chain-driven company. Shen saw it differently: “Our inventory takes up 10 per cent of annual sales, which is still acceptable. We share the risks and costs for part of the inventory with our suppliers. Our inventory problem is actually a problem of the stocking structure.” Shen felt that the company’s inventory problem was closely related to the sales behaviour of certain salespeople who were given too much control. Therefore, she felt that it was urgent to establish an effective incentive and constraint mechanism to manage the sales team; otherwise, the company would continue to experience inventory problems.

However, Tian suggested that it was understandable that sales representatives tended to push the best-selling products. To remedy the situation, he suggested that decentralization could be effective in arousing internal incentives. Tian felt that sales representatives contributed greatly to the company’s development. When the company was first established, the sales team found many market opportunities and marketable products, and co-operated with the supply department on product development, gradually increasing sales and improving the company’s performance.

Inventory had always been a concern for traditional offline apparel companies. As a cross-border e-commerce company, Babyonline would inevitably face the inventory problem once the company implemented a make-to-stock system. Tian was reminded of the currently prevailing term “new retail model,” which referred to omni-channel integration. Tian wondered whether, ironically, it was time to resolve online problems by taking advantage of off-line practices.

Exhibit 1: Comparison of Suzhou Beibao E-Commerce Co. Ltd.’s Office Space in 2012 (Left) and its Office Space in 2017 (Right)



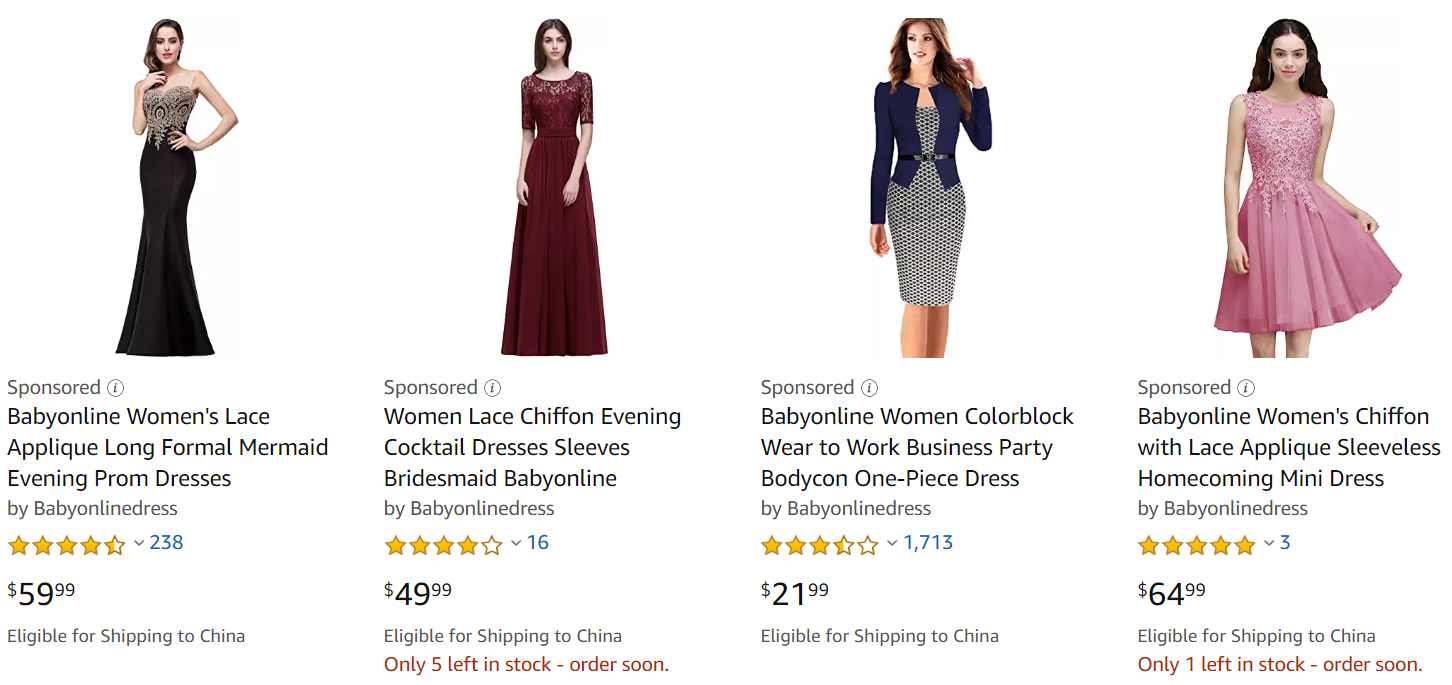
Source: Company files.

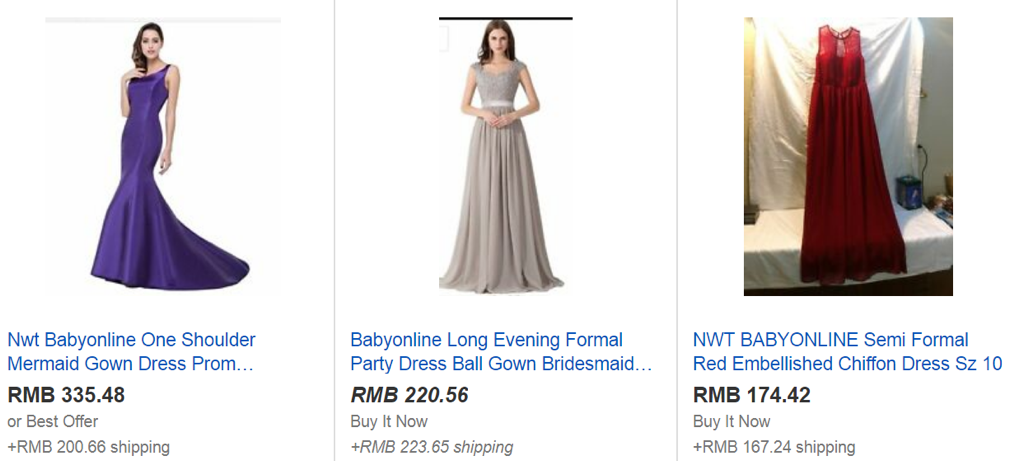
Exhibit 2: Suzhou Beibao E-Commerce Co. Ltd. Annual Sales, 2012–2017   
(in ¥ thousands)

Note: ¥ = RMB = Chinese yuan renminbi; US$1 = ¥6.42 on June 1, 2018

Source: Company files.

Exhibit 3: BabyonlineDress Brand images on e-Commerce Platforms





Source: “Babyonline,” Amazon, accessed March 7, 2019, www.amazon.com/s?k=babyonlinedress&ref=nb\_sb\_noss\_2; “Babyonline,” eBay, accessed March 7, 2019, www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?\_from=R40&\_trksid=m570.l1313&\_nkw=babyonline&\_sacat=0.

Exhibit 4：China's Top 10 Cross-border Export E-commerce Sellers in 2017

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Category** | **Percentage of Total** |
| 1 | 3C electronic products | 20.8 |
| 2 | Clothing | 9.5 |
| 3 | Home gardening | 6.5 |
| 4 | Outdoor products | 5.4 |
| 5 | Health and beauty | 5.0 |
| 6 | Shoes, hats, and bags | 4.7 |
| 7 | Maternal and infant toys | 3.3 |
| 8 | Auto parts | 3.1 |
| 9 | Lighting | 2.8 |
| 10 | Safety monitoring | 2.2 |
| 11 | Others | 36.7 |
|  | Total | 100.0 |

Note: 3C electronic products = computers, communication, and consumer electronics

Source: “China’s Export Cross-border E-Commerce Development Report in 2017,” China Electronics Chamber of Commerce (in Chinese), June 12, 2018, accessed June 28, 2019, www.cecc.org.cn/news/201806/526394.html.

Exhibit 5: China’s To 10 National and Regional Cross-border E-Commerce Exports in 2017

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Countries and Regions** | **Percentage of Total** |
| 1 | United States | 15.0 |
| 2 | Russia | 12.5 |
| 3 | France | 11.4 |
| 4 | United Kingdom | 8.7 |
| 5 | Brazil | 6.5 |
| 6 | Canada | 4.7 |
| 7 | Germany | 3.4 |
| 8 | Japan | 3.1 |
| 9 | South Korea | 2.8 |
| 10 | India | 1.6 |
| 11 | Others | 30.3 |
|  | **Total** | **100.0** |

Source: “China’s Export Cross-border E-Commerce Development Report in 2017,” China Electronics Chamber of Commerce (in Chinese), June 12, 2018, accessed June 28, 2019, www.cecc.org.cn/news/201806/526394.html.

1. “Suzhou Wedding Dress Industry Confronted with ‘the Harshest Clampdown’; Is the Golden Age of Suzhou Huqiu Wedding Dress Industry Over?” SINA (in Chinese), July 10, 2018, accessed January 24, 2019, http://k.sina.com.cn/article\_6166805925\_16f91fda502000dckf.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ¥ = RMB = Chinese yuan renminbi; US$1 = ¥6.42 on June 1, 2018; all currency amounts are in ¥ unless otherwise specified. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “DHgate Introduction,” DHgate, accessed May 17, 2019, http://seller.dhgate.com/promotion/278-platform-introduction-en.html?d=platformyemian#hp-lc-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “China’s Export Cross-border E-Commerce Development Report in 2017,” China Electronics Chamber of Commerce (in Chinese), June 12, 2018, accessed June 28, 2019, www.cecc.org.cn/news/201806/526394.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Zhuo Li, Keyuan Chen, Jun Yang, “China’s Cross-Border E-Commerce 3.0 Era: Generalized Preferential Treatment Brings New Opportunities to Rewrite the Global Trade Pattern,” NBD Daily Economic News (in Chinese), September 5, 2018, accessed January 25, 2019 www.nbd.com.cn/articles/2018-09-05/1252079.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Li Zhang, “China Enters Phase 3.0 of Cross-Border E-Commerce Characterized by Global Retail,” SOHU (in Chinese), January 1, 2018, accessed January 25, 2019, www.sohu.com/a/219942661\_468675. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. “LITB Set to Be Delisted Warning: Prodigy Founder Resignation, Top Friends Exposure,” New Retail Think-Tank (in Chinese), November 10, 2018, accessed January 25, 2019, http://dy.163.com/v2/article/detail/E09B9C140511EGQL.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Zheng Dong, “Huqiu Wedding City: Drawing a New Prospect of China’s Wedding Industry,” *China Textile* 1 (2017): 27–29. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. “Layout of China’s Wedding Capital Cross-Border Electronic Commerce Industry Park to the World,” ChinaNews (in Chinese), July 10, 2017, accessed January 24, 2019, www.js.chinanews.com/news/2017/0710/171976.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Yanling Yang and Yiting Yuan, “A Study on the Paths to Export Competitiveness of Suzhou Wedding Dresses,” *Journal of Suzhou Vocational University* 27, no. 4 (2016): 39–43. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)