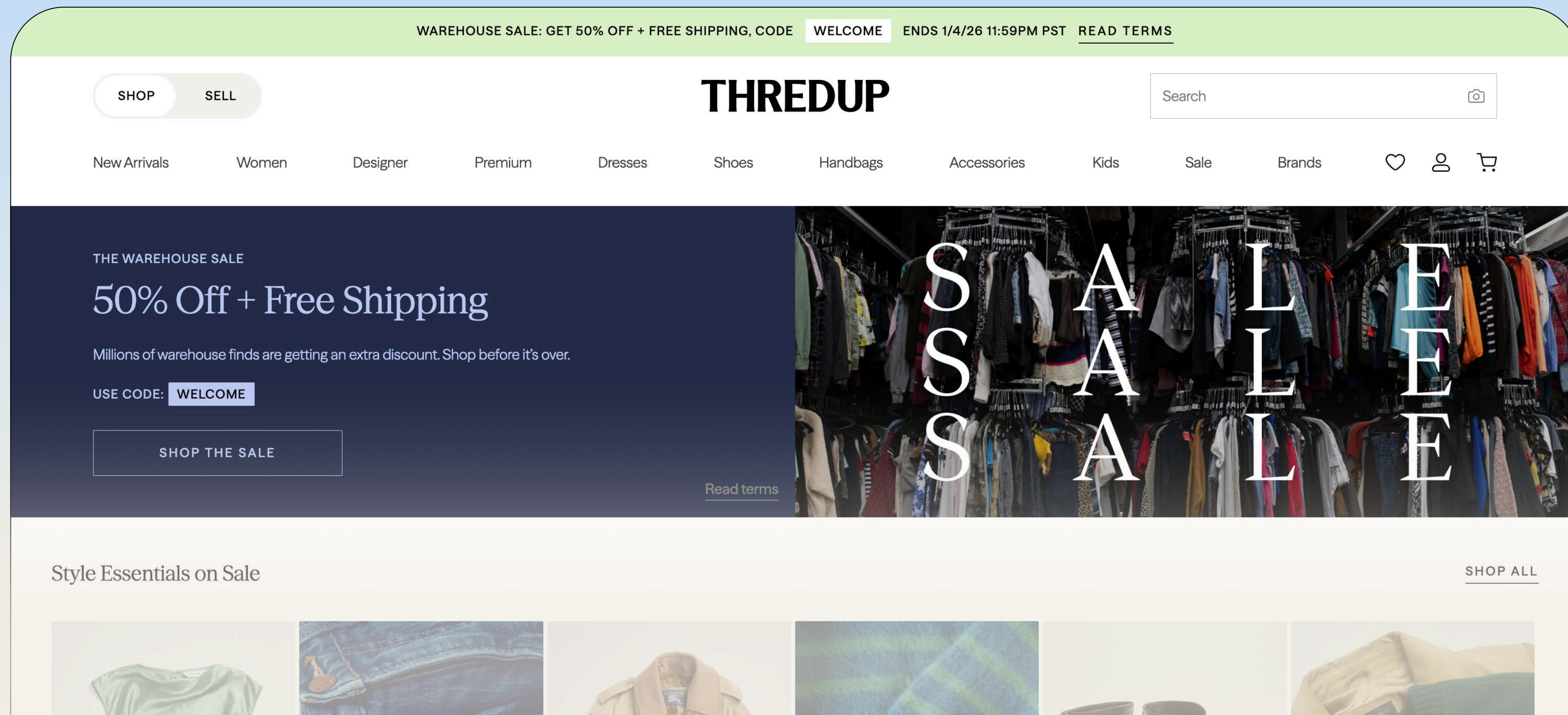
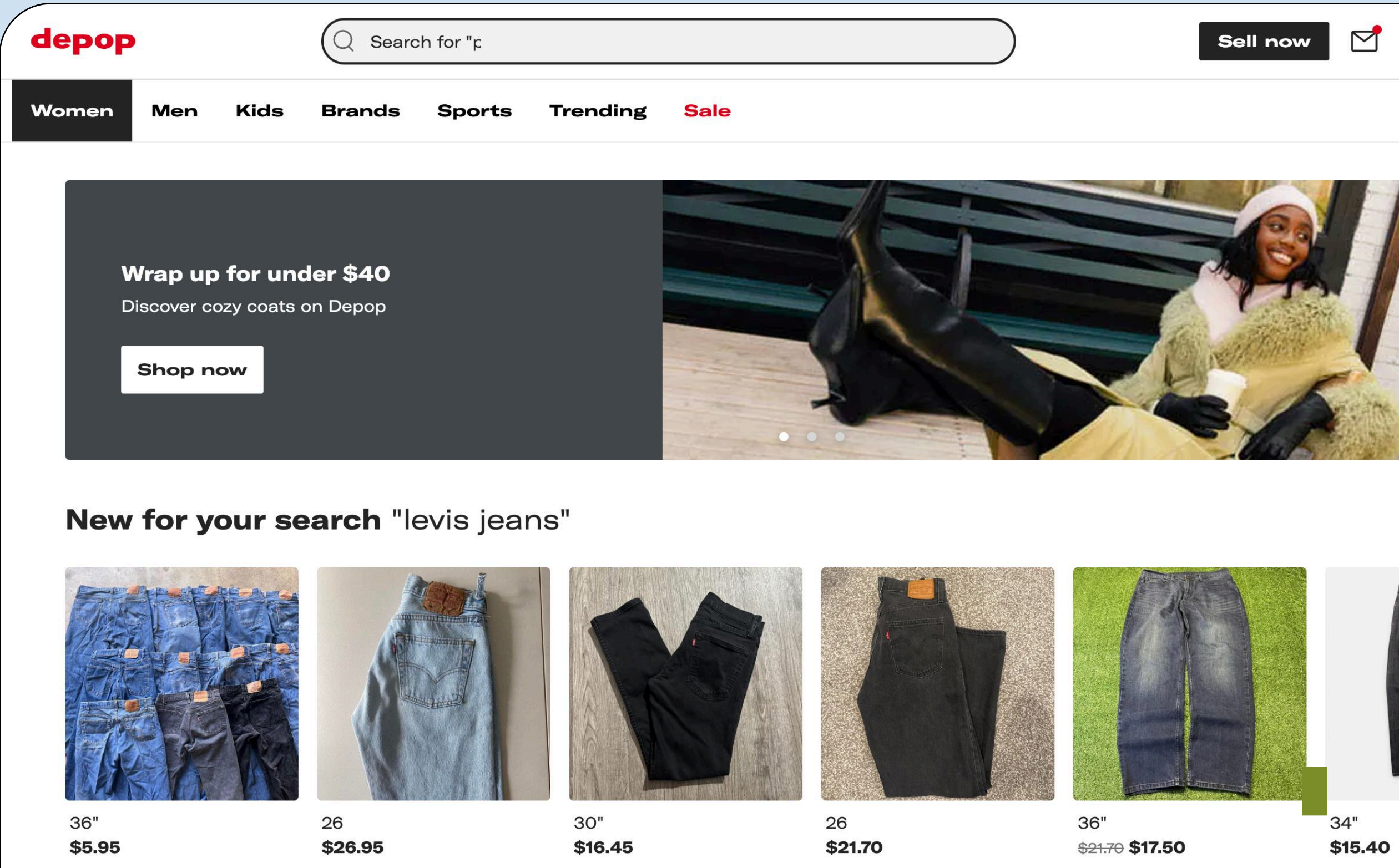
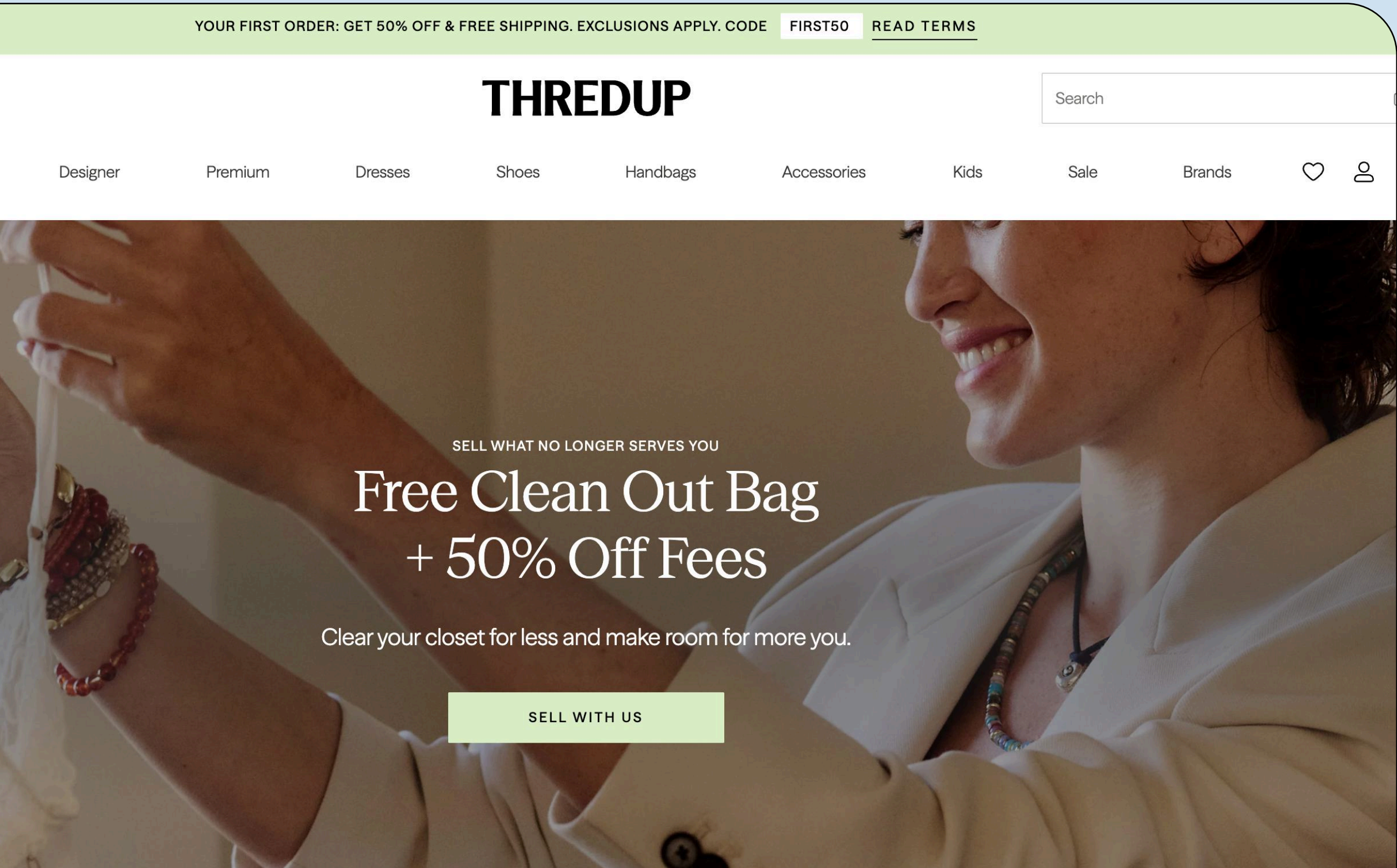


Usability Evaluation of Product Discovery in Thredup



Heuristic Analysis

THREDUP VS DEPOP



36"
\$5.95



26
\$26.95



30"
\$16.45



26
\$21.70



36"
\$17.50



34"
\$15.40

Initial Workflow Scope

1. Completing a purchase

2. Locating a specific item of clothing

3. Reviewing and editing an account profile

4. Reviewing favorited items

Severity Distribution Across Workflows

 **THREDUP**

Major severity issue **33%**

Flow 1 **2 / 3**

Flow 2 **3 / 7**

depop

Major severity issue **25%**

Flow 1 **2 / 4**

Flow 2 **1 / 1**

Selected Workflows for In-Depth Analysis

1. Completing a purchase

2. Locating a specific item of clothing

3. Reviewing and editing an account profile

4. Reviewing favorited items

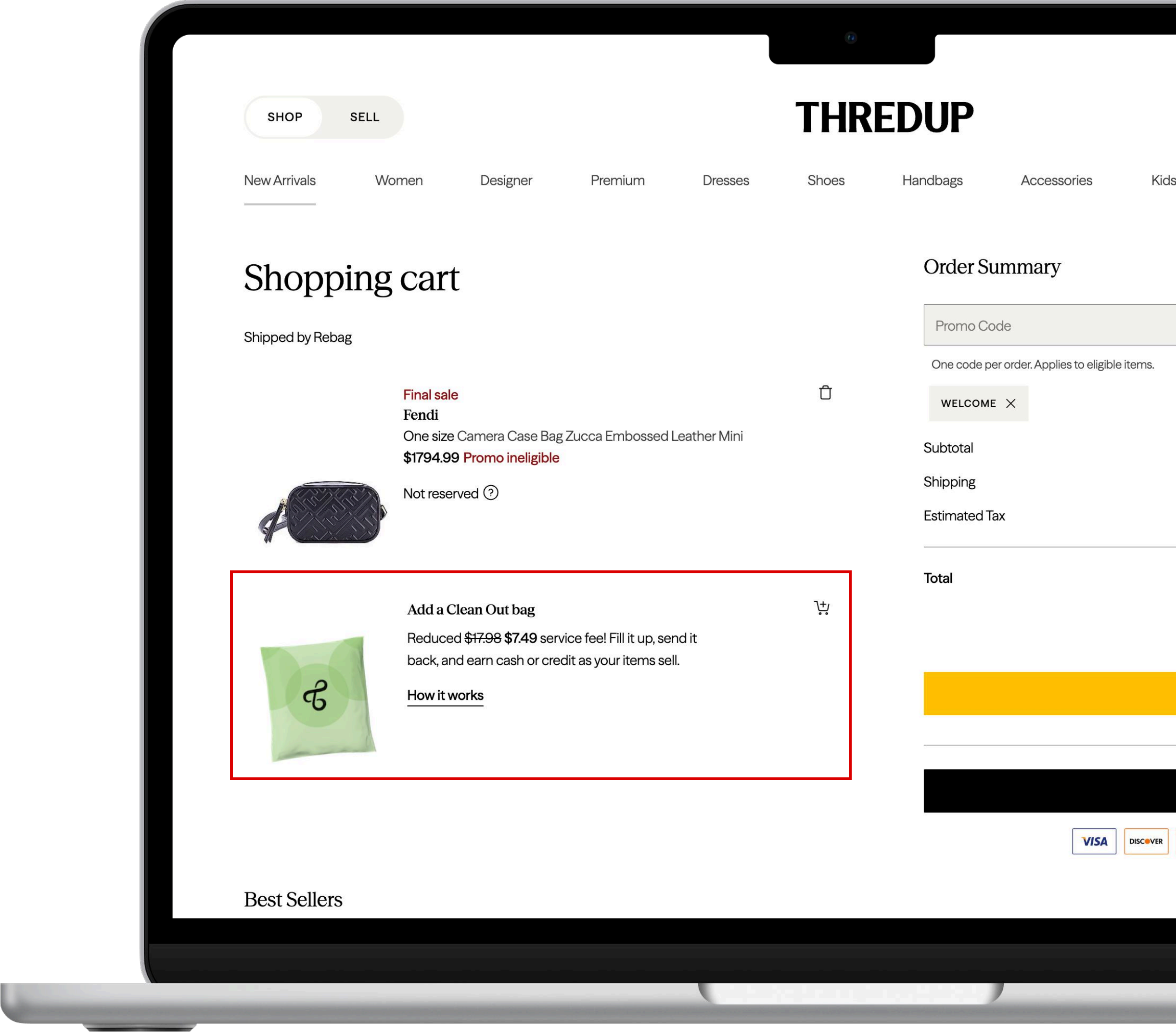
Key Usability Issues Identified

WORK FLOW 1 “COMPLETING A PURCHASE”

Optional upsell is indistinguishable from cart items

RECOGNITION RATHER THAN RECALL | 3 - MAJOR

In this shopping cart, the “Add a Clean Out bag” option visually resembles actual cart items and appears within the cart content area, without clearly indicating that it is an optional add-on.



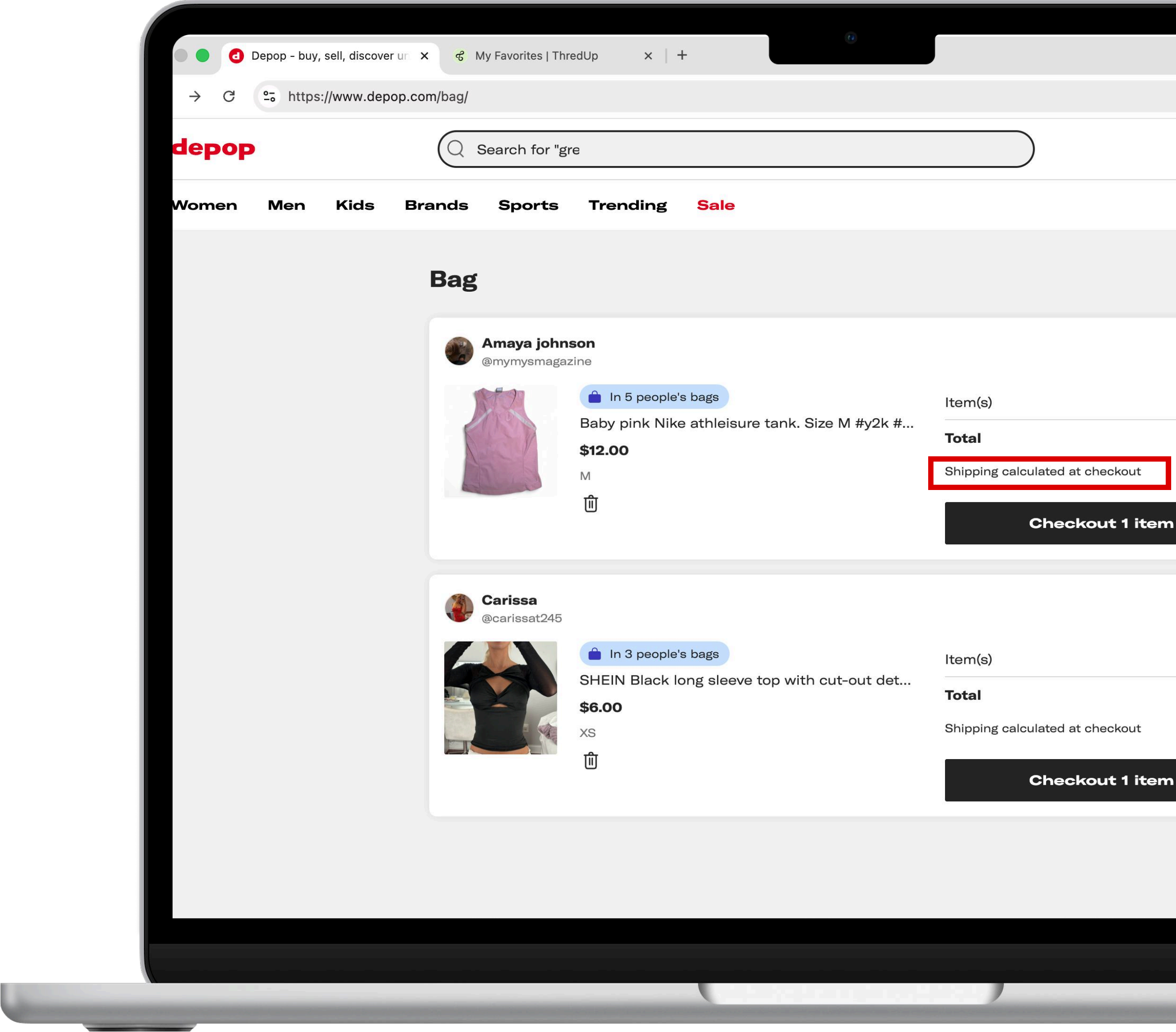
Key Usability Issues Identified

WORK FLOW 1 “COMPLETING A PURCHASE”

Shipping cost is not visible before checkout

VISIBILITY OF SYSTEM STATUS | 3 - MAJOR

On Depop’s website, the shopping bag does not show shipping costs and only indicates that they will be calculated at checkout even the adress is savd.



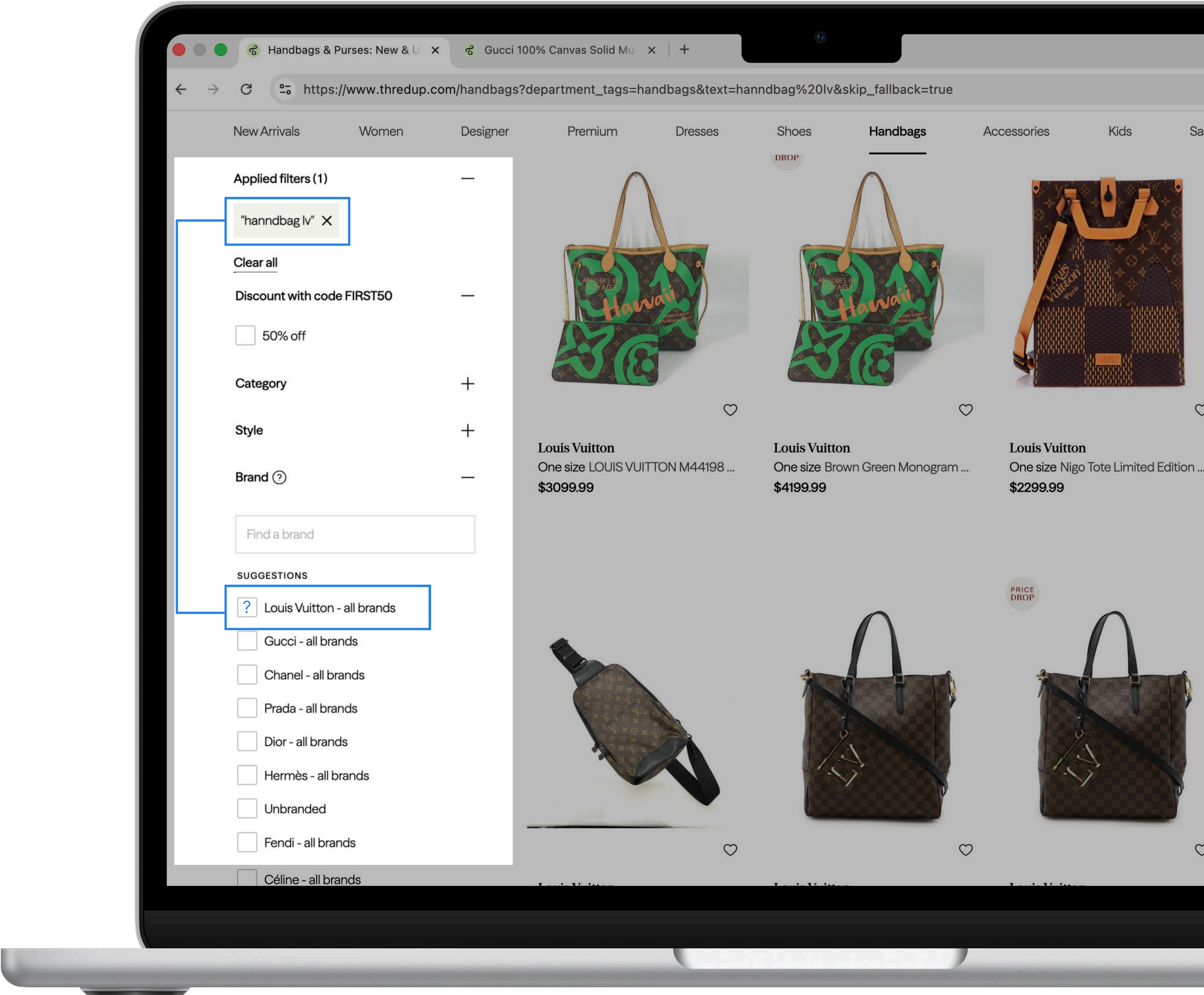
Key Usability Issues Identified

WORK FLOW 2 “LOCATING A SPECIFIC ITEM OF CLOTHING”

Search Intent is not Reflected in the Filter Panel

RECOGNITION RATHER THAN RECALL | 3 - MAJOR

After user searching for a specific item, the filter panel does not clearly reflect how the search intent has been interpreted.



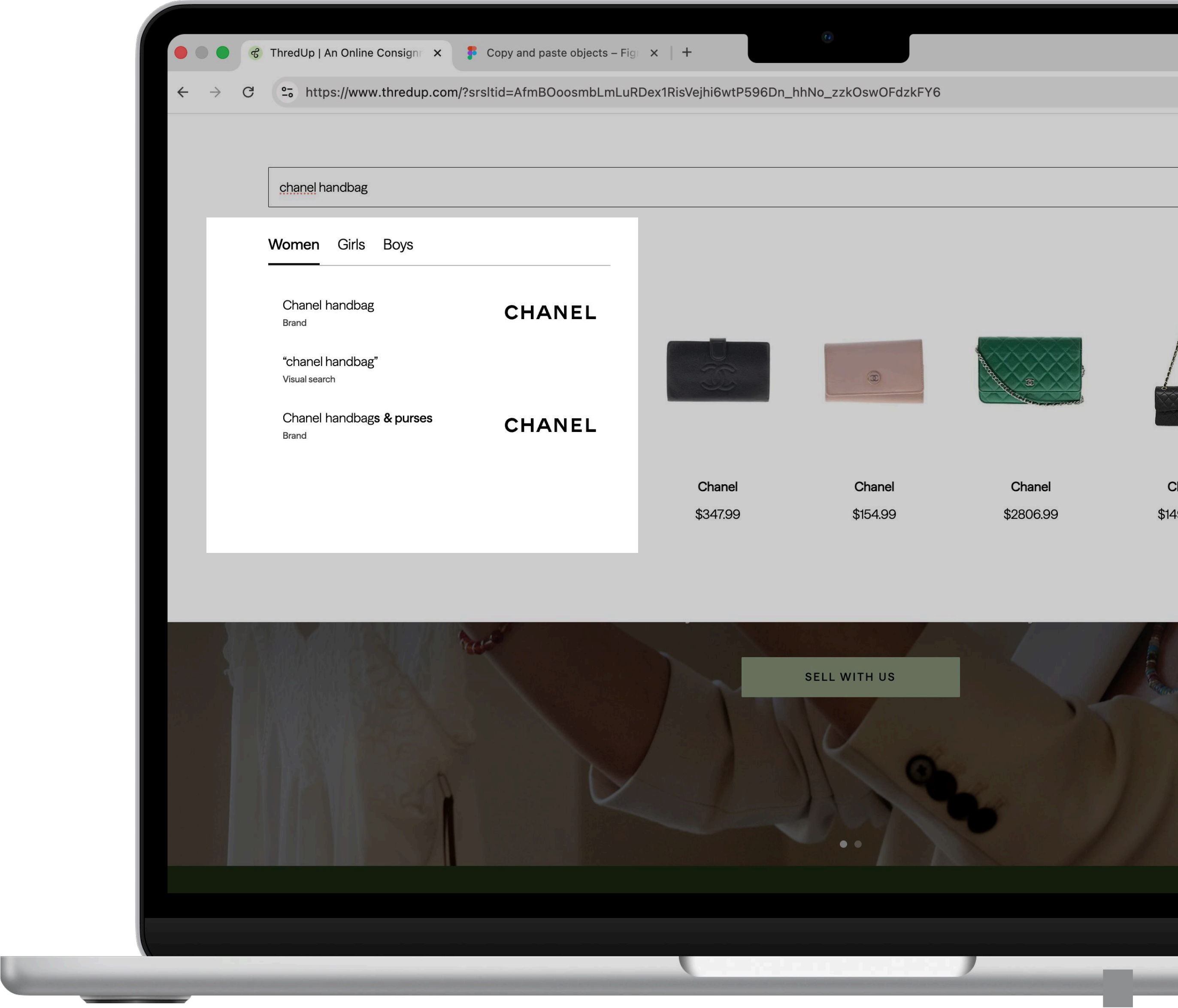
Key Usability Issues Identified

WORK FLOW 2 “LOCATING A SPECIFIC ITEM OF CLOTHING”

Search category tabs lack system feedback

VISIBILITY OF SYSTEM STATUS | 3 - MAJOR

When users select category tabs during a keyword search, the search results do not visibly change or provide any feedback., making it unclear whether the selection has been applied.



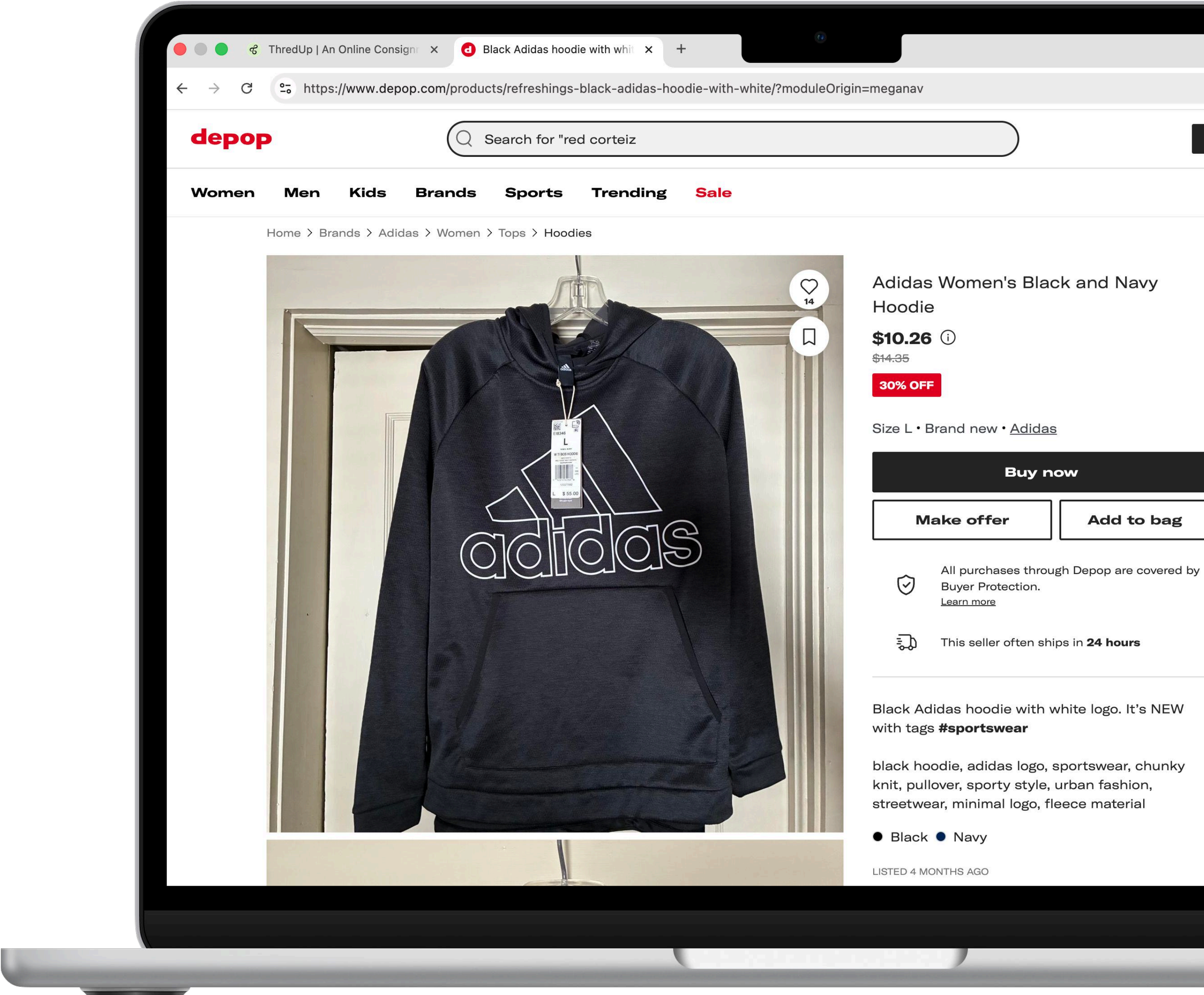
Key Usability Issues Identified

WORK FLOW 2 “LOCATING A SPECIFIC ITEM OF CLOTHING”

Insufficient Product Detail and Inconsistent Image Quality on Product Page

RECOGNITION RATHER THAN RECALL | 3 - MAJOR

Product detail pages rely entirely on seller-uploaded images. Many listings lack close-up or detail photos, and image quality varies significantly, making it difficult for users to clearly understand item condition and quality.



Priority Workflow

1. Completing a purchase

2. Locating a specific item of clothing

3. Reviewing and editing an account profile

4. Reviewing favorited items

Testing Hypothesis

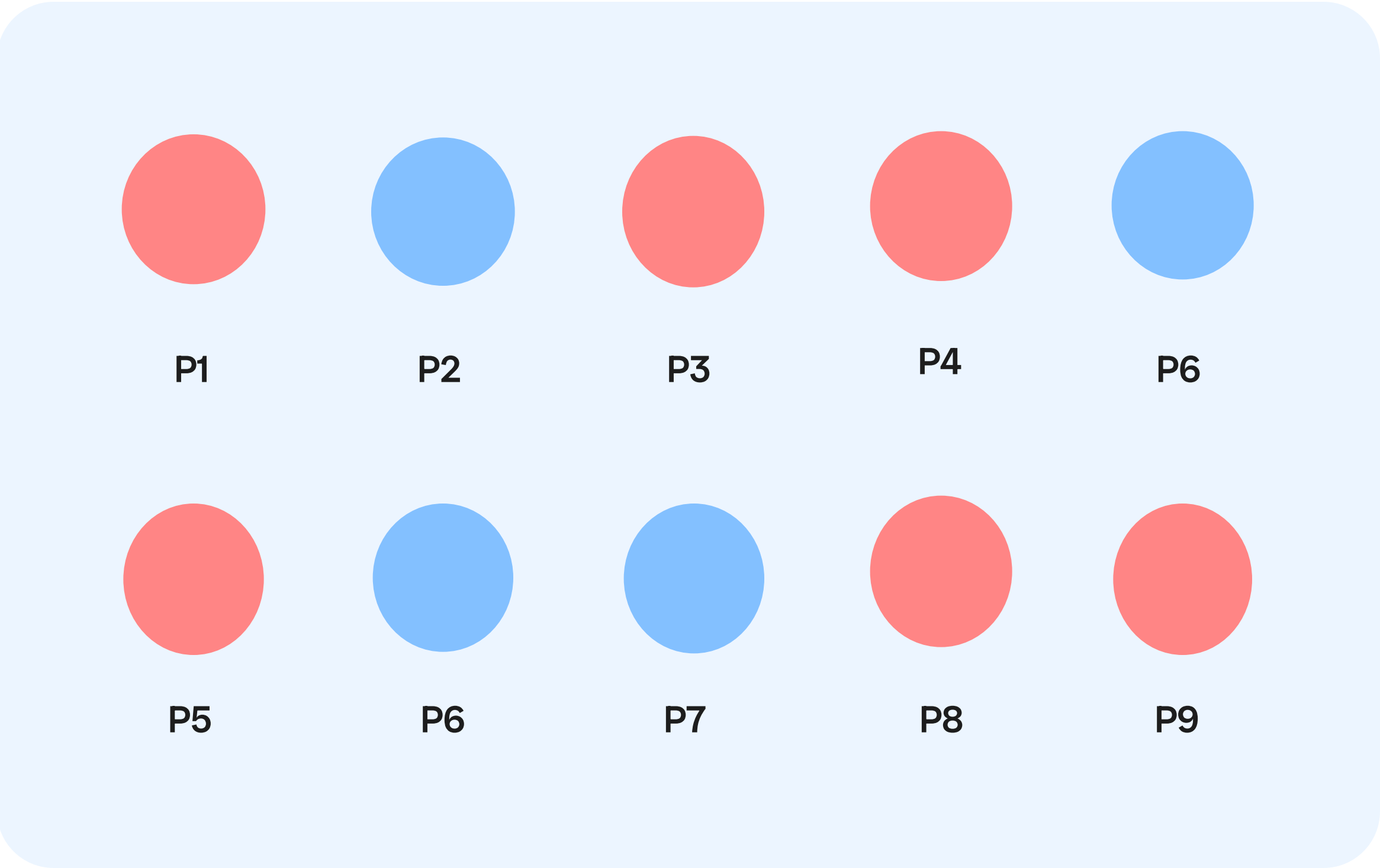
TESTING HYPOTHESIS

We believe that a clearer and more structured navigation system for users searching for a branded item will lead to reduced cognitive effort, faster and more accurate product discovery, increased product exploration, and improved purchase conversion.

Testing - Moderated Study

Participants Profile

10 Participants



 Male  Female

Gen Z and Millennial users aged 18–40 who have purchased secondhand clothing online at least once within the past year.

Test Task

Context :

Imagine you are a young adult with a conscious-budget who wants to buy a cloth for the next presentation.

Task 1

Use the site to find a jacket that you would consider buying, following the criteria provided:

- Must be black
- Must cost no more than \$80
- Size M
- Must appear to be in near-new condition

Test Task

Context :

Imagine you are a young adult with a conscious-budget who wants to buy a cloth for the next presentation.

Task 2

You've found a jacket that you like, but you want to make sure it's the best option for you. Locate an alternative jacket based on the following criteria:

- Must be Brown
- Spend no more than \$50
- Size M
- Must appear to be in near-new condition
- [Must use a different method than you used in the previous task](#)

Moderated findings

User Patterns

#1 Search-First Default

P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, and P8 chose the search bar as their primary entry point.

P10 immediately switched to search after finding the navigation confusing or insufficient.

#2 Users showed more hesitation when using ThredUp's filters than Depop's

All participants except P8 hesitated when applying filters on ThredUp.

#3 Users prioritize product images over system text labels

P1, P3, P4, P7, and P10 prioritized product images to verify item condition and quality.

P1, P2, P6, P8, and P9 prioritized product images as the primary decision factor.

FINDING 1

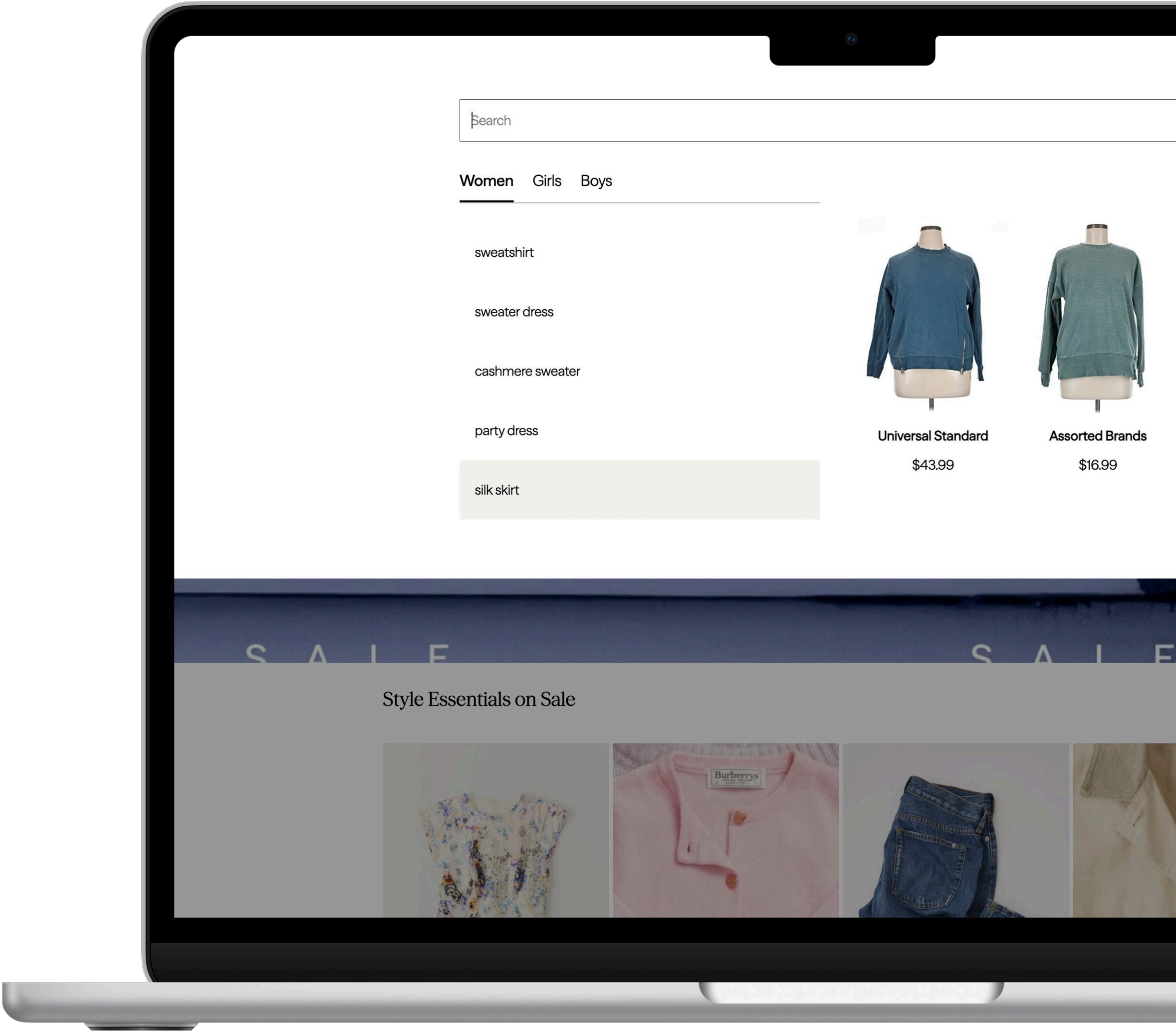
Misleading Category Structure

Users rely on search when navigation structure fails

- Lack of a clear Men category created confusion
- Some participants searched “boys” to find men's items
- Search was used as a workaround when browsing failed

Insight explanation

The current category taxonomy does not match users’ expectations.



FINDING 2

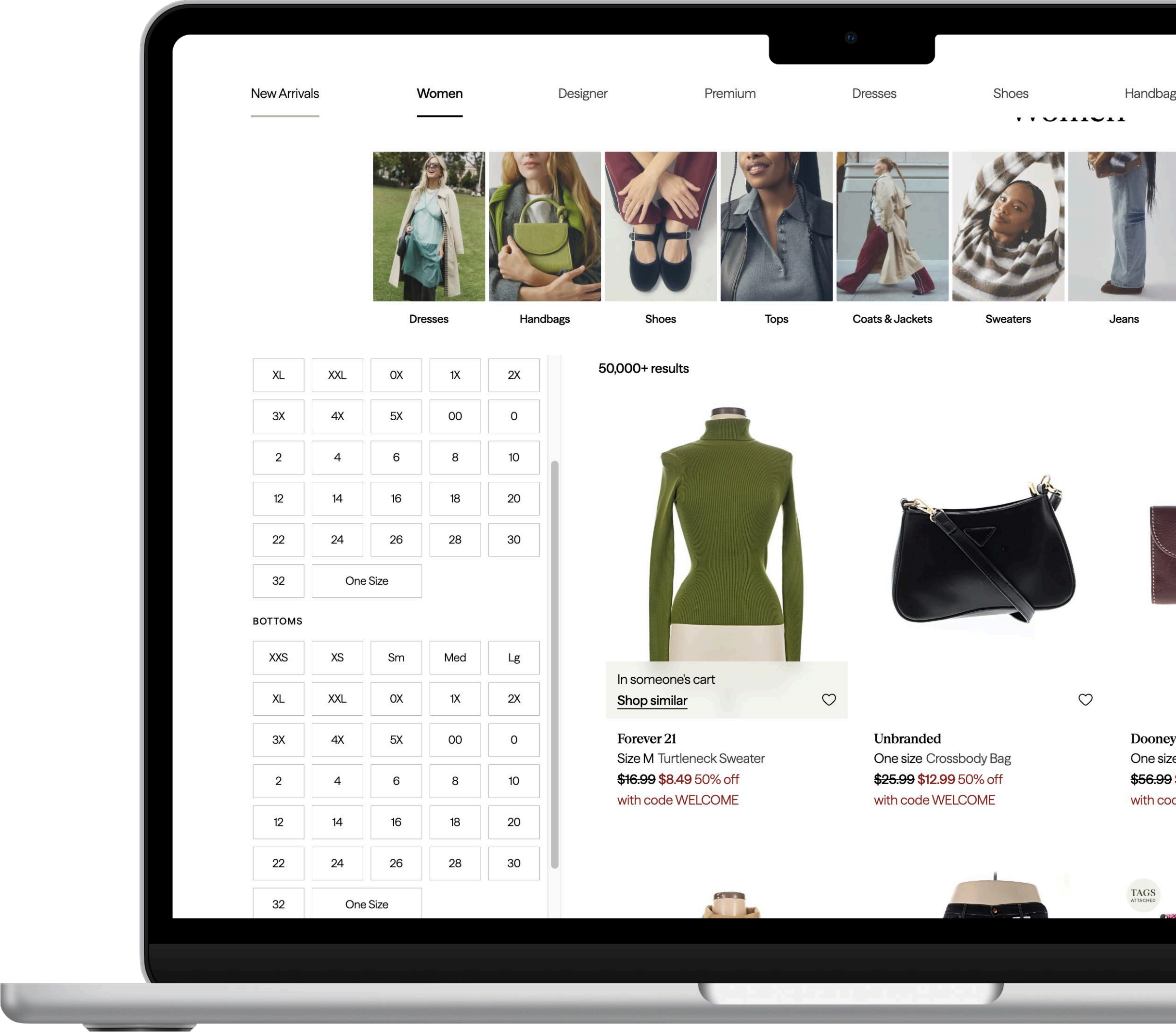
Size System Mismatch

Numeric sizing conflicts with users' mental models

- Participants struggled to interpret numeric sizing (8/10, 36)
- Users preferred simple S/M/L categories
- Numeric sizing increased decision hesitation during filtering

Insight explanation

The sizing system does not match users’ real-world expectations of clothing sizes.



FINDING 3

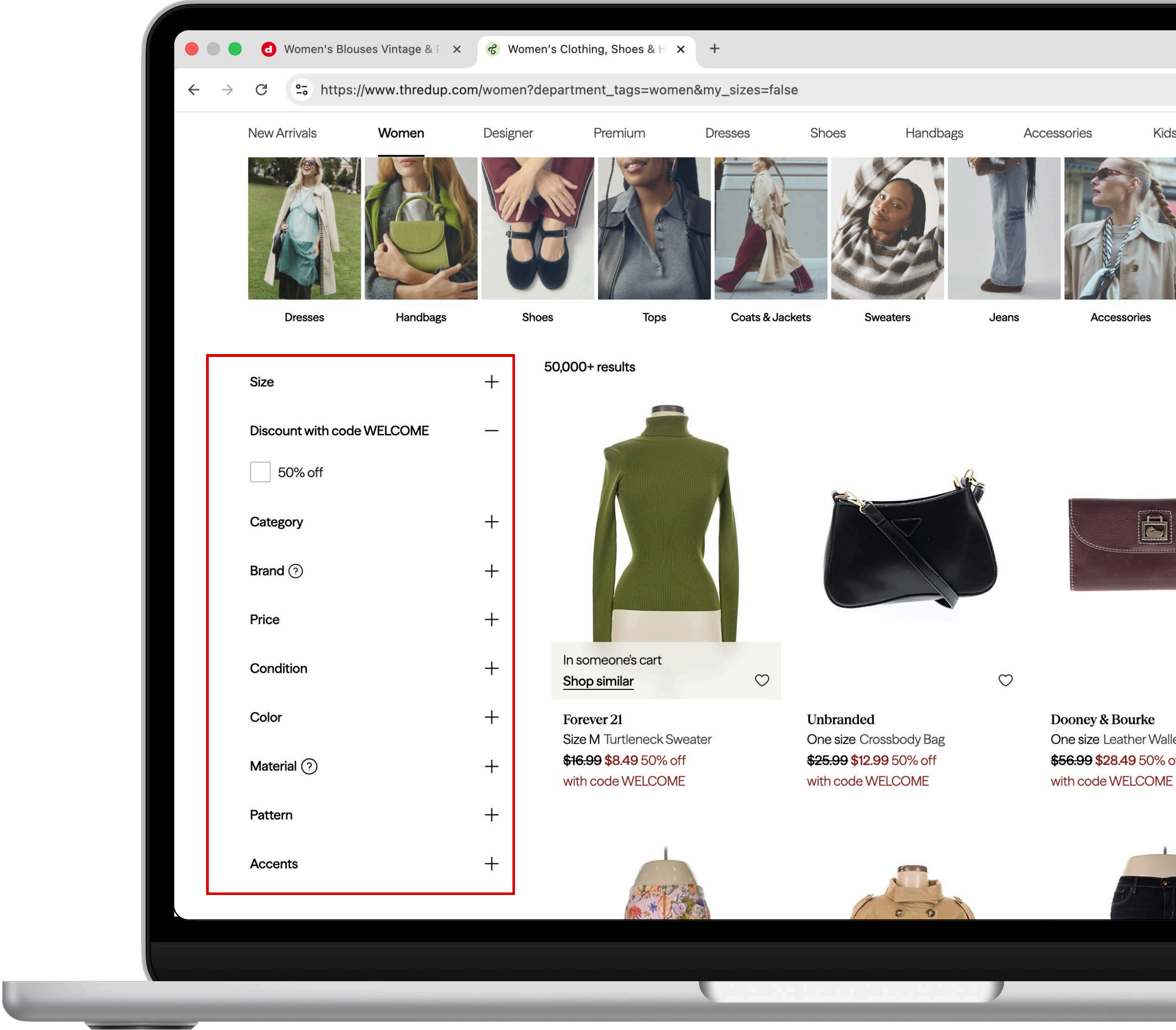
Filter Discoverability

Users struggle to locate and confidently use filtering tools

- 4/10 participants could not initially locate the size filter
- Multiple users scrolled through results before noticing filters
- 6/10 users hesitated when applying size filters

Insight explanation

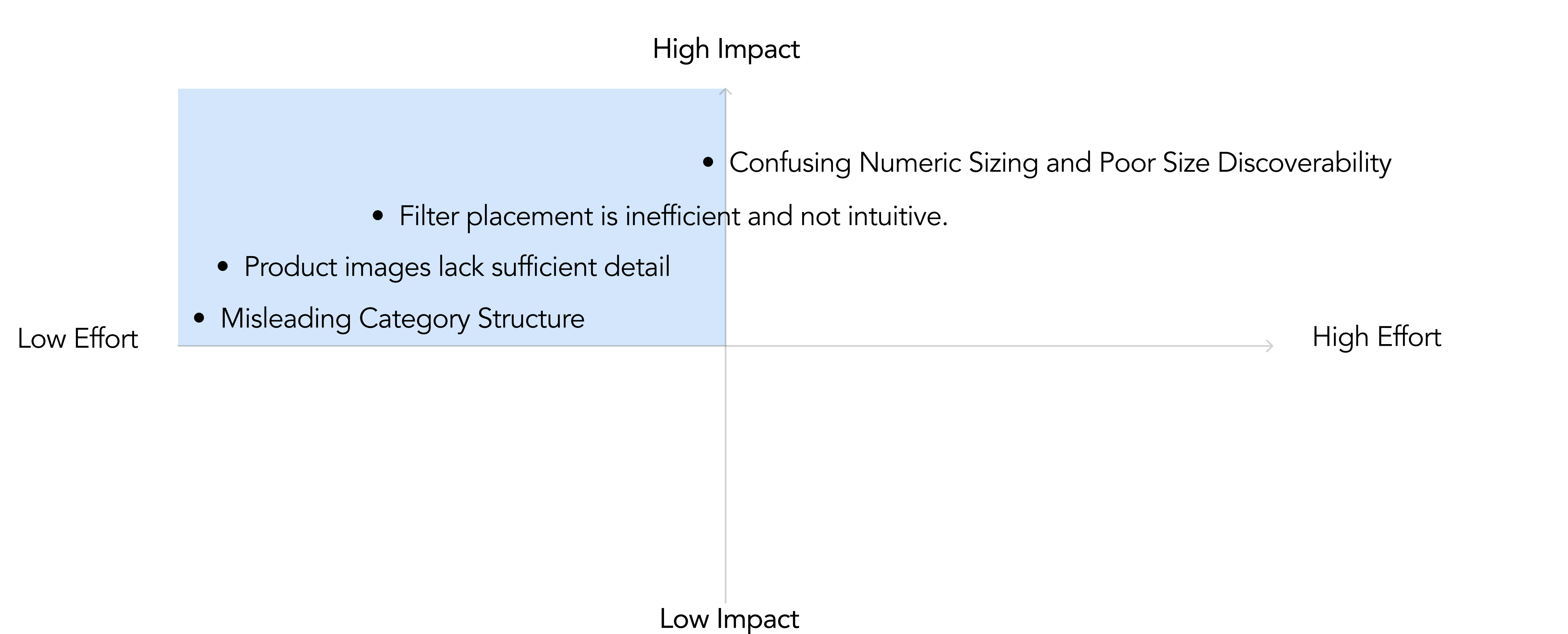
Filter placement and visual hierarchy reduce discoverability and increase hesitation.



Design Recommendation

Prioritization

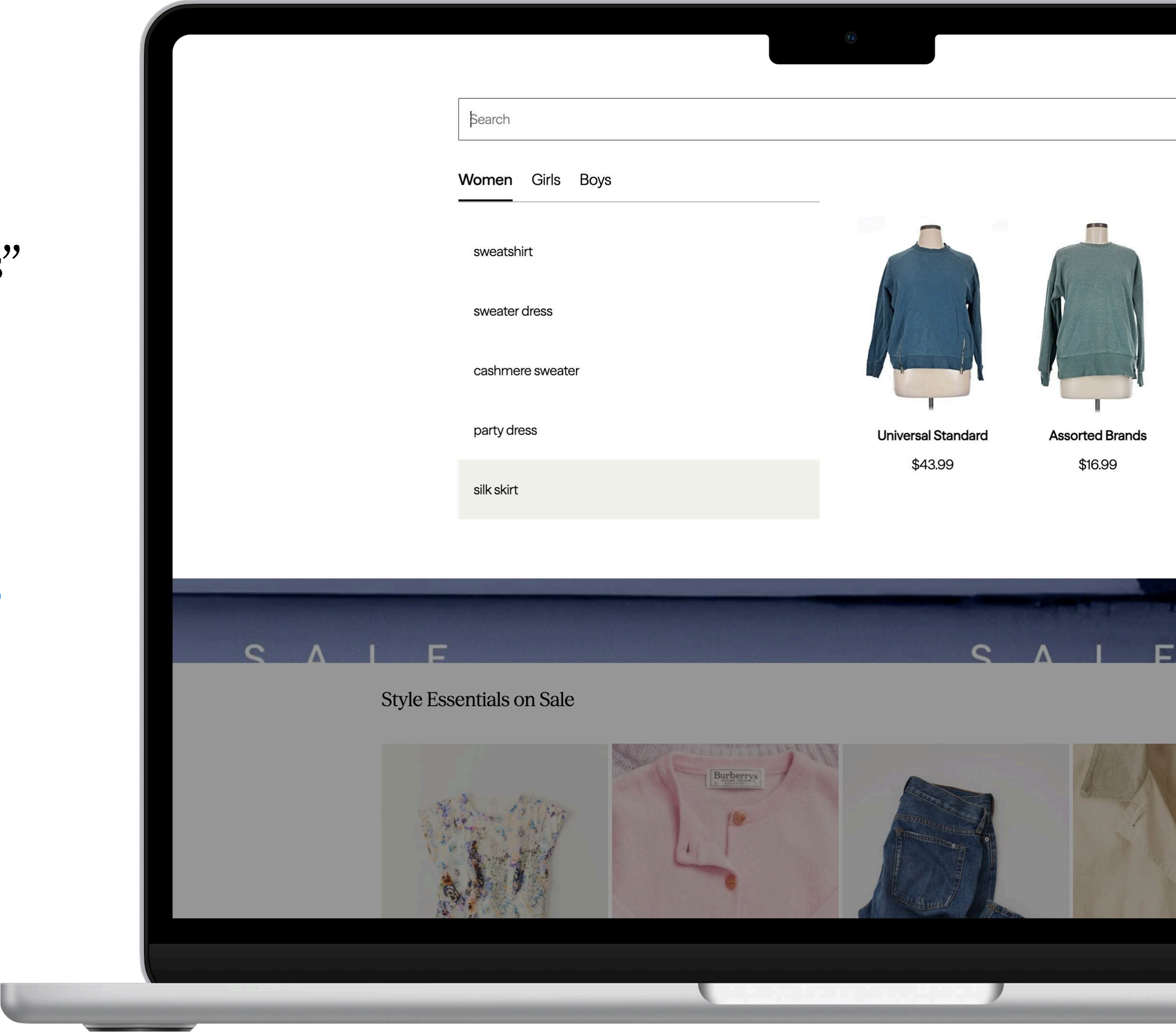
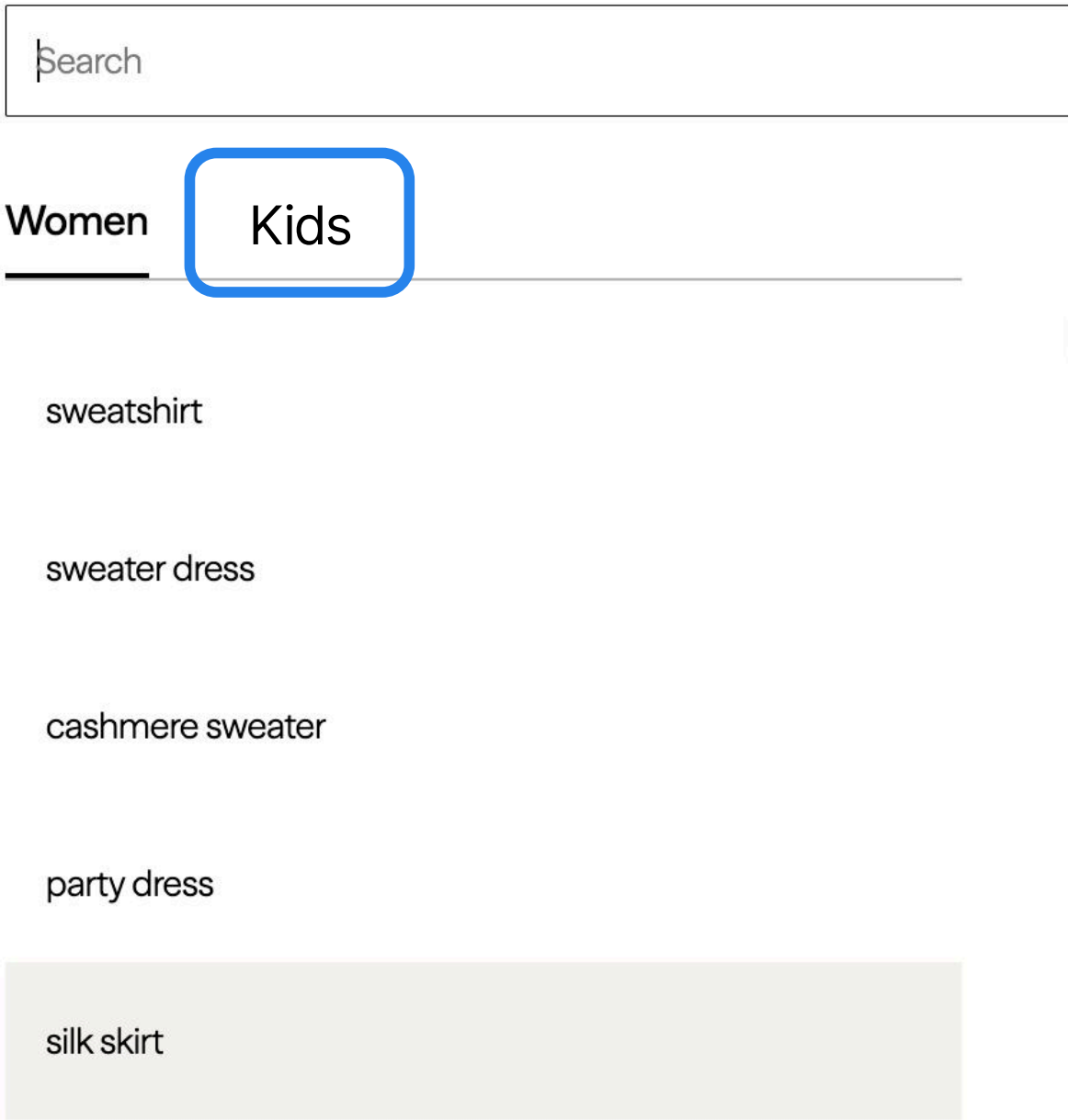
Based on Frequency, Task Impact, Severity, and Cross-Participant Consistency



DESIGN RECOMMENDATION

Misleading Category Structure

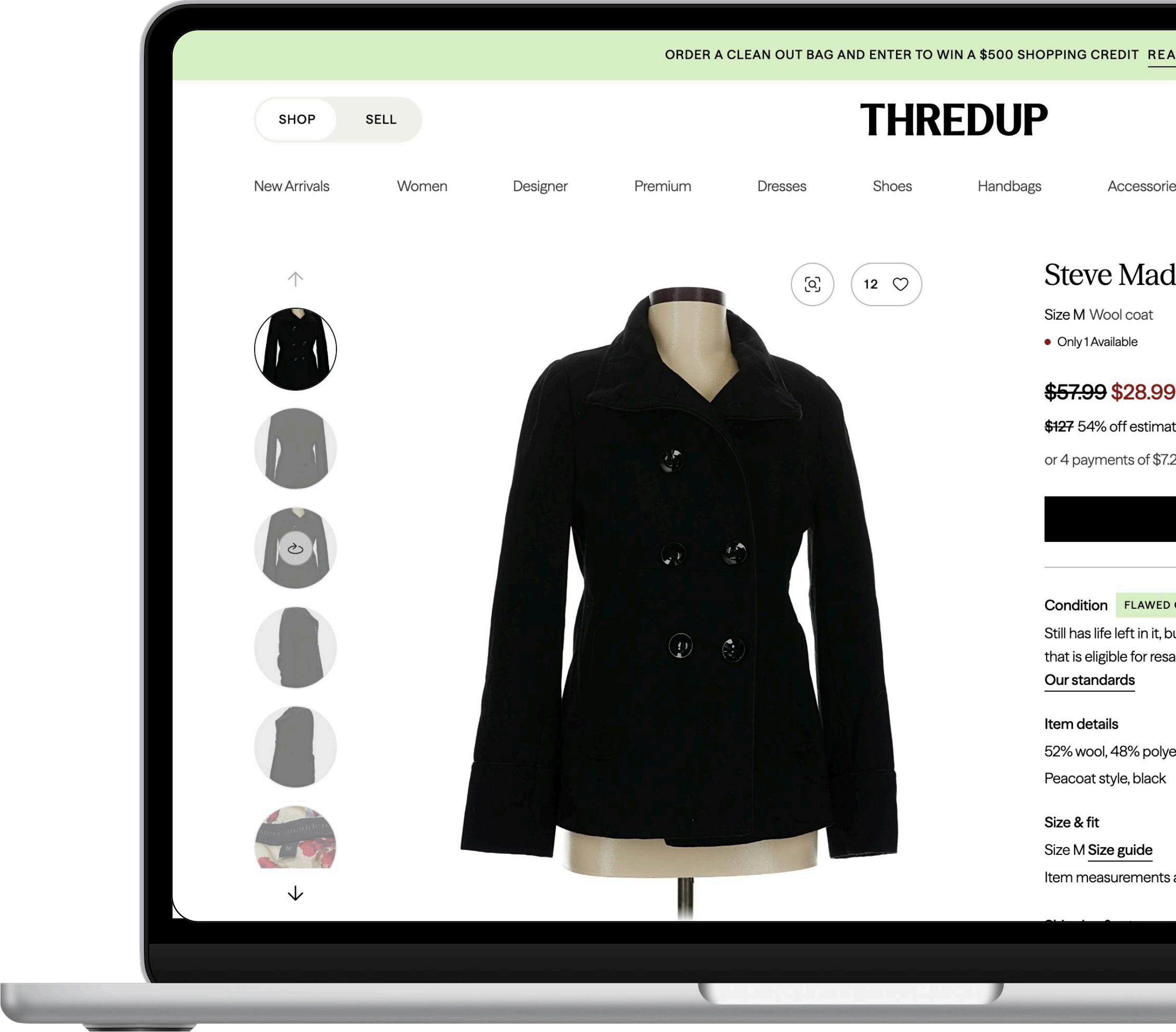
Consolidate the “Girls” and “Boys” categories into a unified “Kids” entry to reduce gender-based navigation confusion.



DESIGN RECOMMENDATION

Product images lack sufficient detail

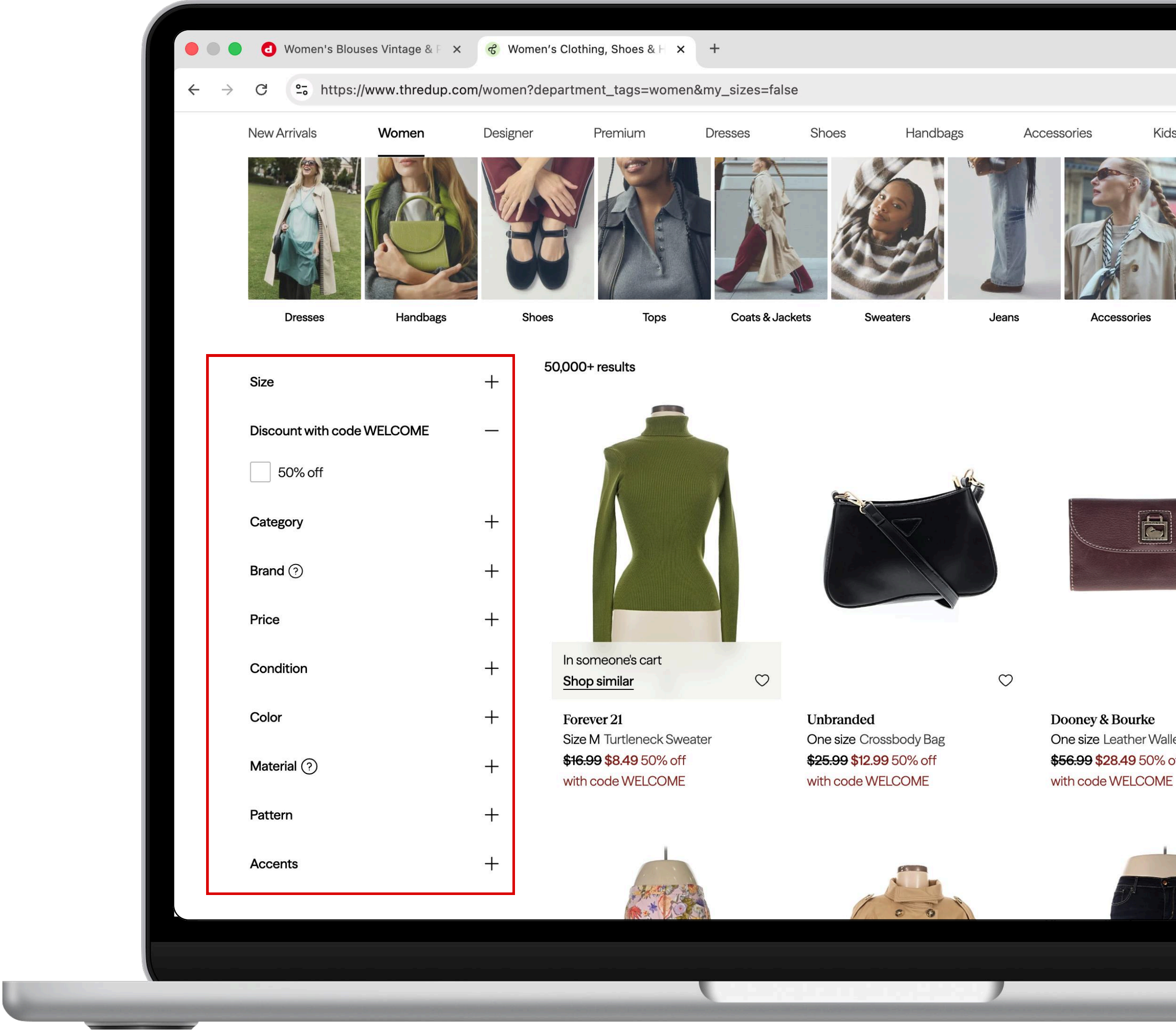
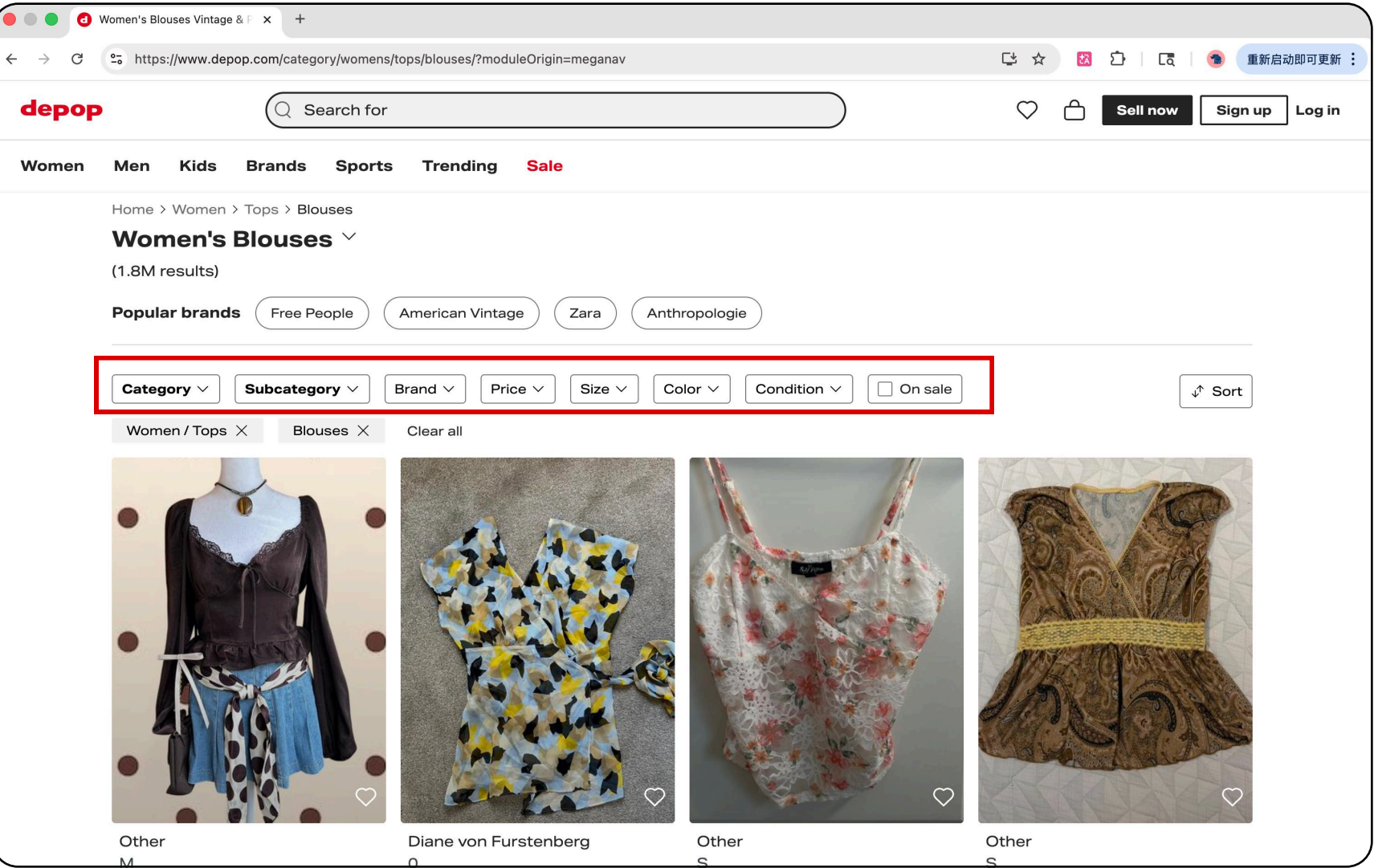
Include additional close-up detail shots (e.g., neckline, cuffs, stitching, fabric texture) to improve users' confidence in product condition assessment.



DESIGN RECOMMENDATION

Filter Discoverability

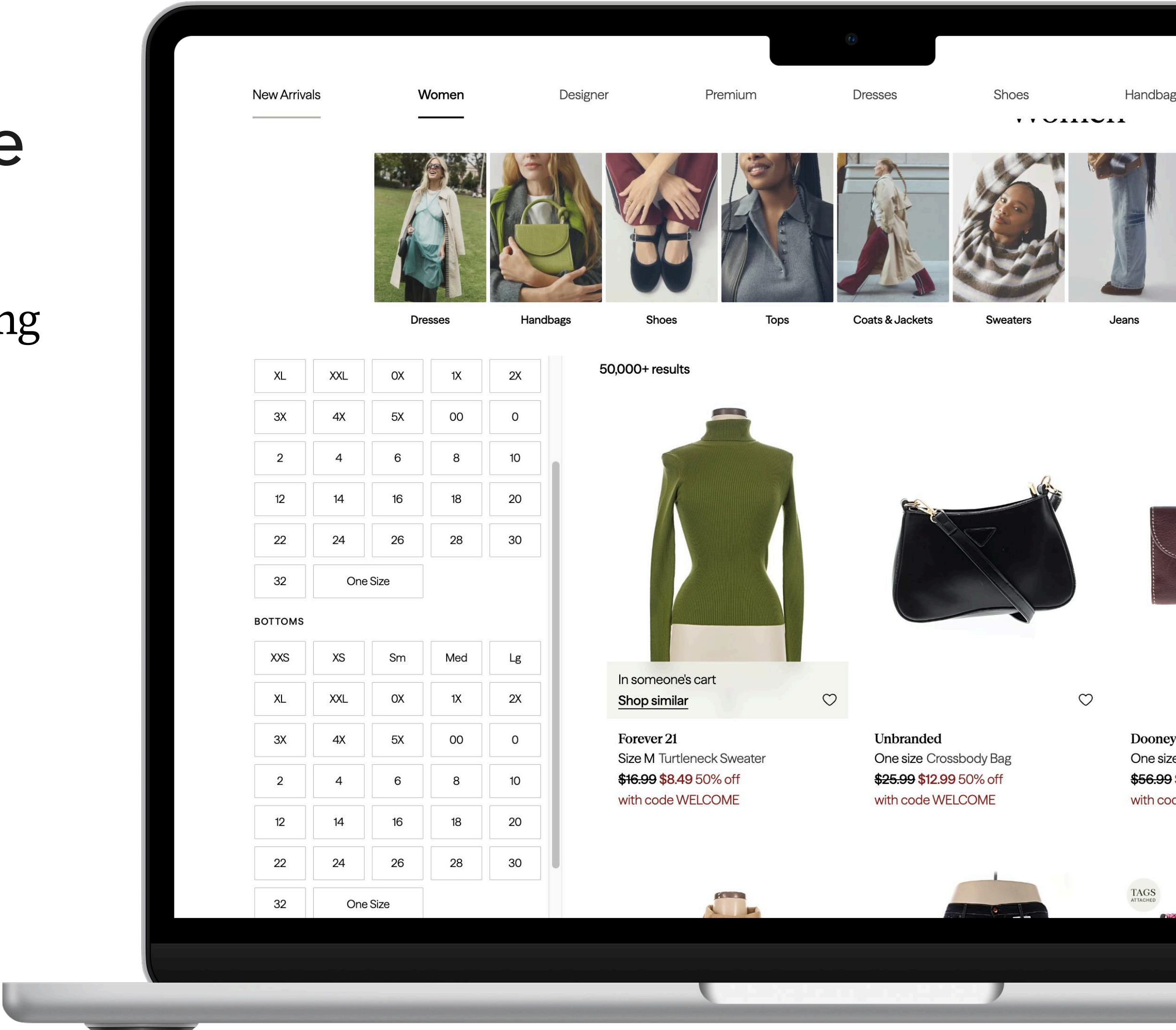
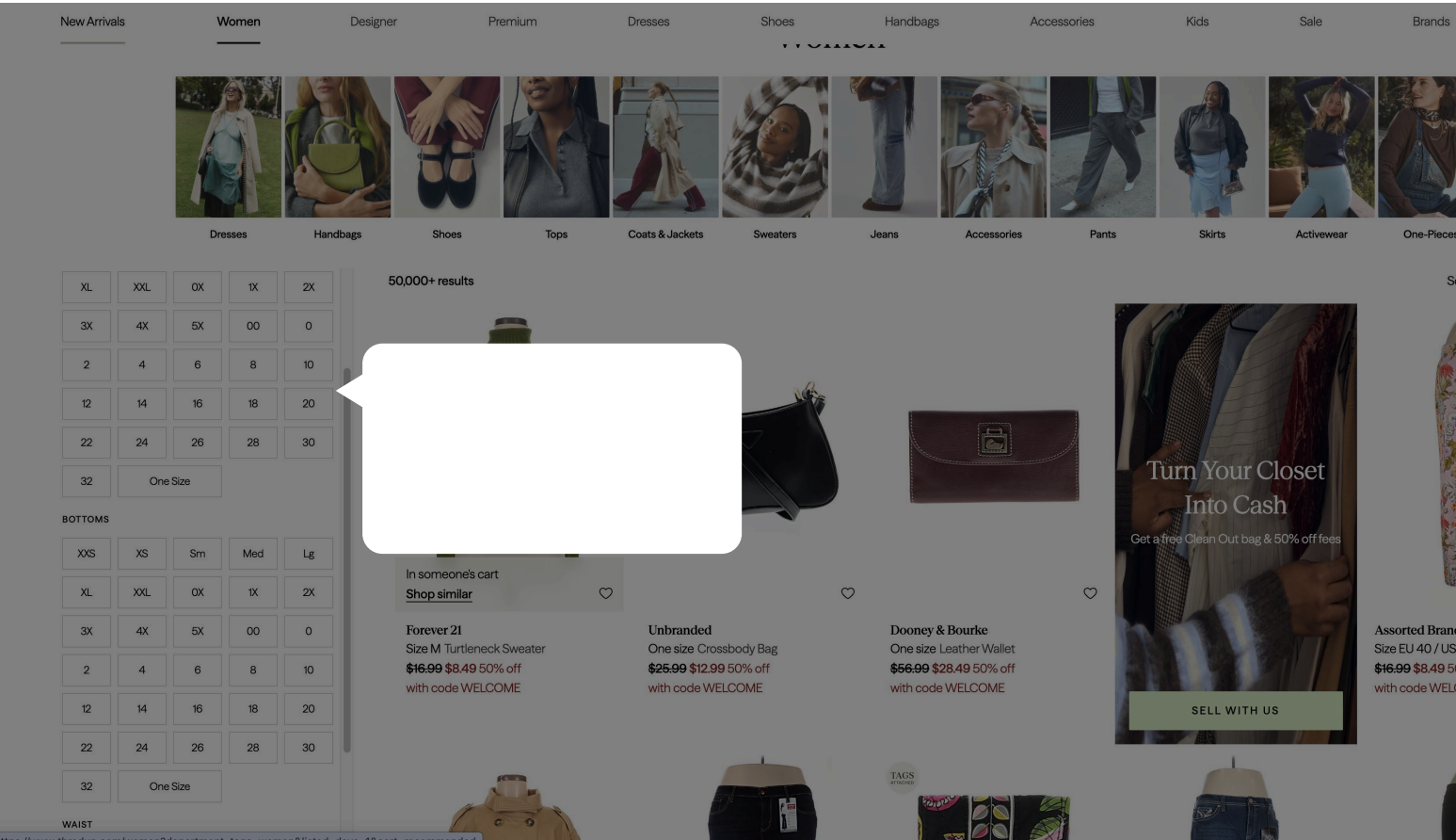
Introduce a horizontally aligned, top-positioned filter bar (similar to Depop) to improve visibility and reduce filter friction.



DESIGN RECOMMENDATION

Confusing Numeric Sizing and Poor Size Discoverability

Introduce a size-preference selection during onboarding, allowing users to choose between alpha (S/M/L) and numeric sizing to reduce confusion and filtering friction.



Testing - Unmoderated Study

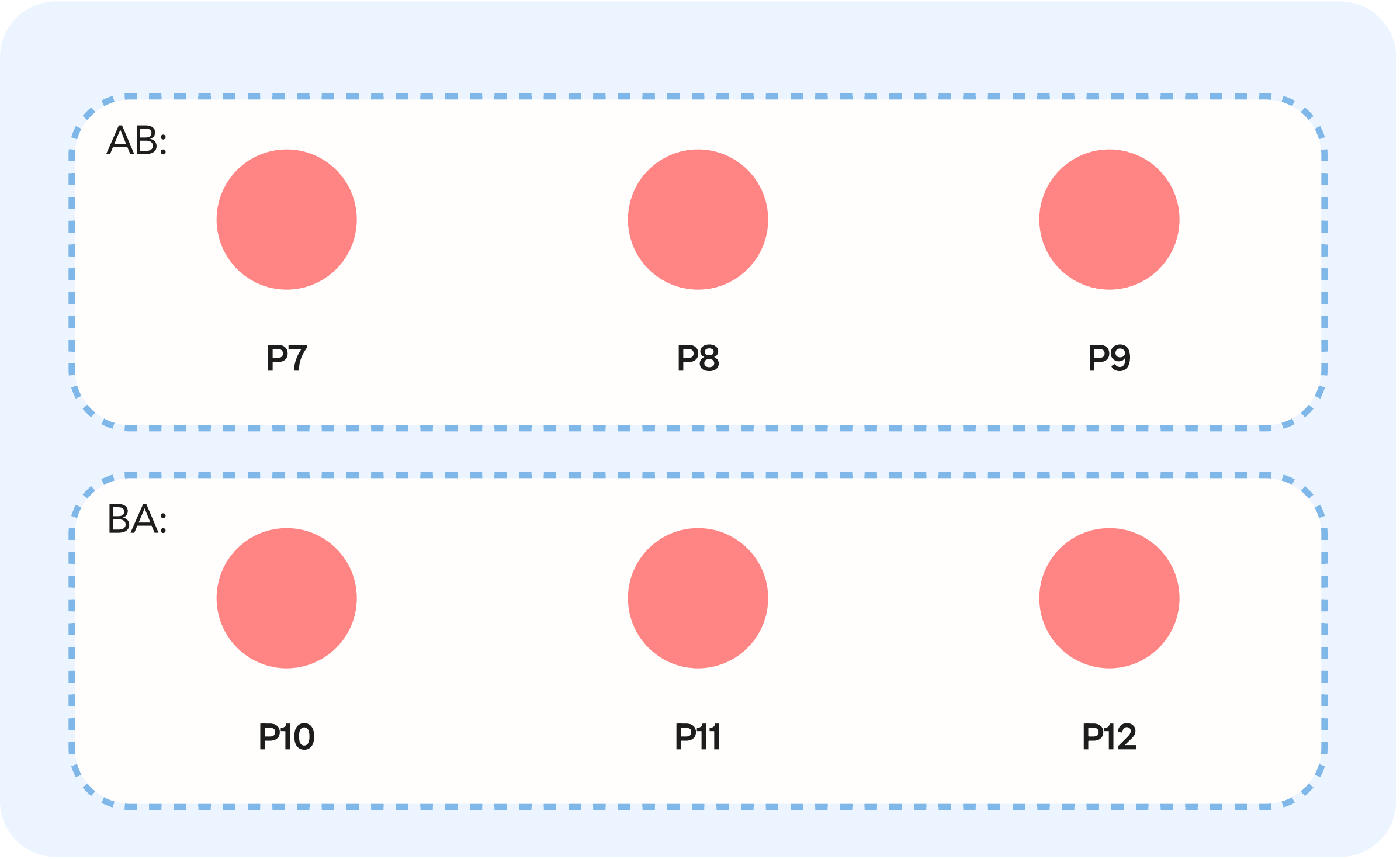
Participants Profile

12 Participants

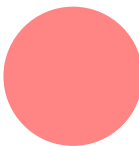
Round 1:



Round 2:



Male



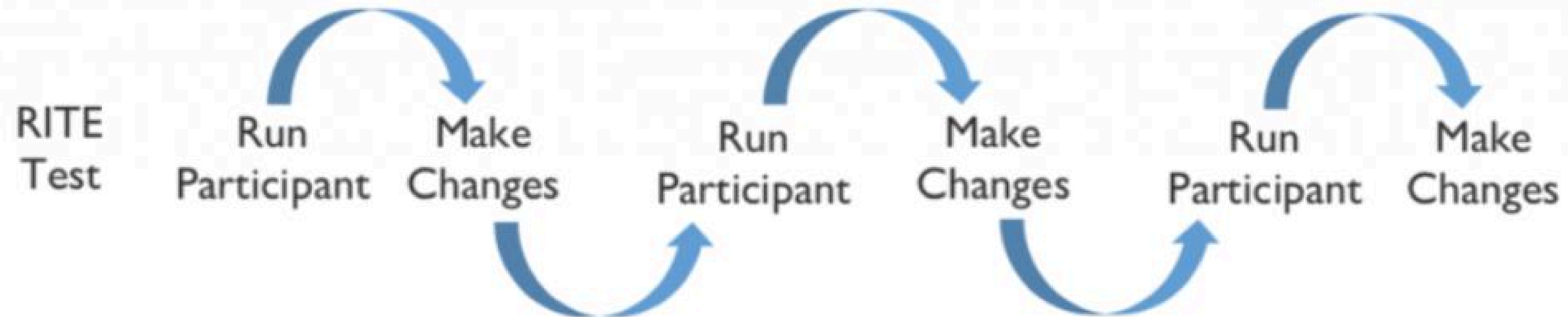
Female

Methodology (RITE)

This study used a Rapid Iterative Testing and Evaluation (RITE) approach.

Round 1 will identify usability issues related to navigation, search behavior, and filter usage. Based on the findings, the prototype will be iterated to improve clarity and discoverability.

Round 2 will re-test the same task with A/B versions to measure improvements in efficiency, confidence, and task success.



Maze:

Round 1 :



Scenario
Context Screen



Locate a jacket that meets the follow...
Prototype Test



Please rate the ease of completing t...
Opinion Scale



Please rate your confidence in your ...
Opinion Scale



Which of the following aspects did y...
Multiple Choice

Round 2 (A/B Versions) :



Report introduction



Scenario
Context Screen



Task1: Locate a jacket that meets the...
Prototype Test



Please rate the ease of completing t...
Opinion Scale



Please rate your confidence in your ...
Opinion Scale



Which of the following aspects did y...
Multiple Choice



Task2: Locate a jacket that meets th...
Prototype Test



Please rate your confidence in your ...
Opinion Scale



Between Task 1 and Task 2, which ta...
Multiple Choice



Report introduction



Scenario
Context Screen



Task1: Locate a jacket that meets the...
Prototype Test



Please rate the ease of completing t...
Opinion Scale



Please rate your confidence in your ...
Opinion Scale



Which of the following aspects did y...
Multiple Choice



Task2: Locate a jacket that meets th...
Prototype Test



Please rate your confidence in your ...
Opinion Scale



Between Task 1 and Task 2, which ta...
Multiple Choice

Round 1:

Context :

Imagine you have an upcoming presentation and want to quickly find a business casual jacket.

Task 1

Locate a jacket that meets the following criteria. Stop before entering any payment information.

- Brand: Zara
- Size: M
- Should be Nearly New

Round 1



Scenario
Context Screen



Locate a jacket that meets the follow...
Prototype Test



Please rate the ease of completing t...
Opinion Scale



Please rate your confidence in your ...
Opinion Scale



Which of the following aspects did y...
Multiple Choice

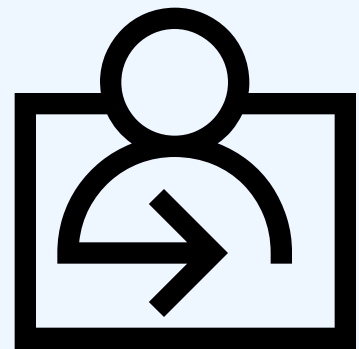
Content:

- 1 task
- 2 followup up questions
- 1 multiple-choice

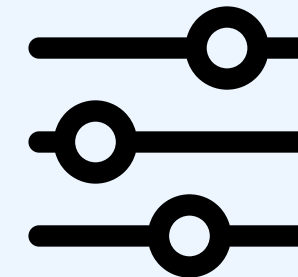
Goal:

- Evaluate how users interact with the new filters and product categories, assess whether the filters improve search accuracy
- Explore whether onboarding can effectively help users understand size conversions.

Iterative Testing



Many users skipped the onboarding popup and mistakenly assumed the size guide in the popup was interactive.



After opening the filter, users encountered many options and multiple selection steps. For instance, the jacket page still displayed size options for other product categories.

Round 2

Context :

Imagine you have an upcoming presentation and want to quickly find a business casual jacket.

Task A

Locate a jacket that meets the following criteria. Stop before entering any payment information.
(Without onboarding and with the redesigned filter system)

- Brand: Zara
- Size: M
- Should be Nearly New

Task B

Locate a jacket that meets the following criteria. Stop before entering any payment information.
(With onboarding and the previous filter system)

- Brand: Zara
- Size: M
- Should be Nearly New

Round 2

	Report introduction
	Scenario Context Screen
	Task1: Locate a jacket that meets the... Prototype Test
	Please rate the ease of completing t... Opinion Scale
	Please rate your confidence in your ... Opinion Scale
	Which of the following aspects did y... Multiple Choice
	Task2: Locate a jacket that meets th... Prototype Test
	Please rate your confidence in your ... Opinion Scale
	Between Task 1 and Task 2, which ta... Multiple Choice

Content:

- 1 task
- 3 followup up questions
- 2 multiple-choice questions

Goal:

- Test whether the size guide helps users understand size conversions among those who go through onboarding.
- Evaluate whether a clearer and more simplified size filter can improve search efficiency and accuracy for users who do not use onboarding.

Unmoderated findings

User Patterns

#1 **Onboarding is not for everyone**

Across both rounds, half of participants skipped the onboarding pop-up.

If onboarding is used, participants tend to prefer a clear guide.

#2 **Fewer filter options reduce complexity**

In the Round 2 A/B test, P7–P12 found the filter system with fewer size options easier to understand.

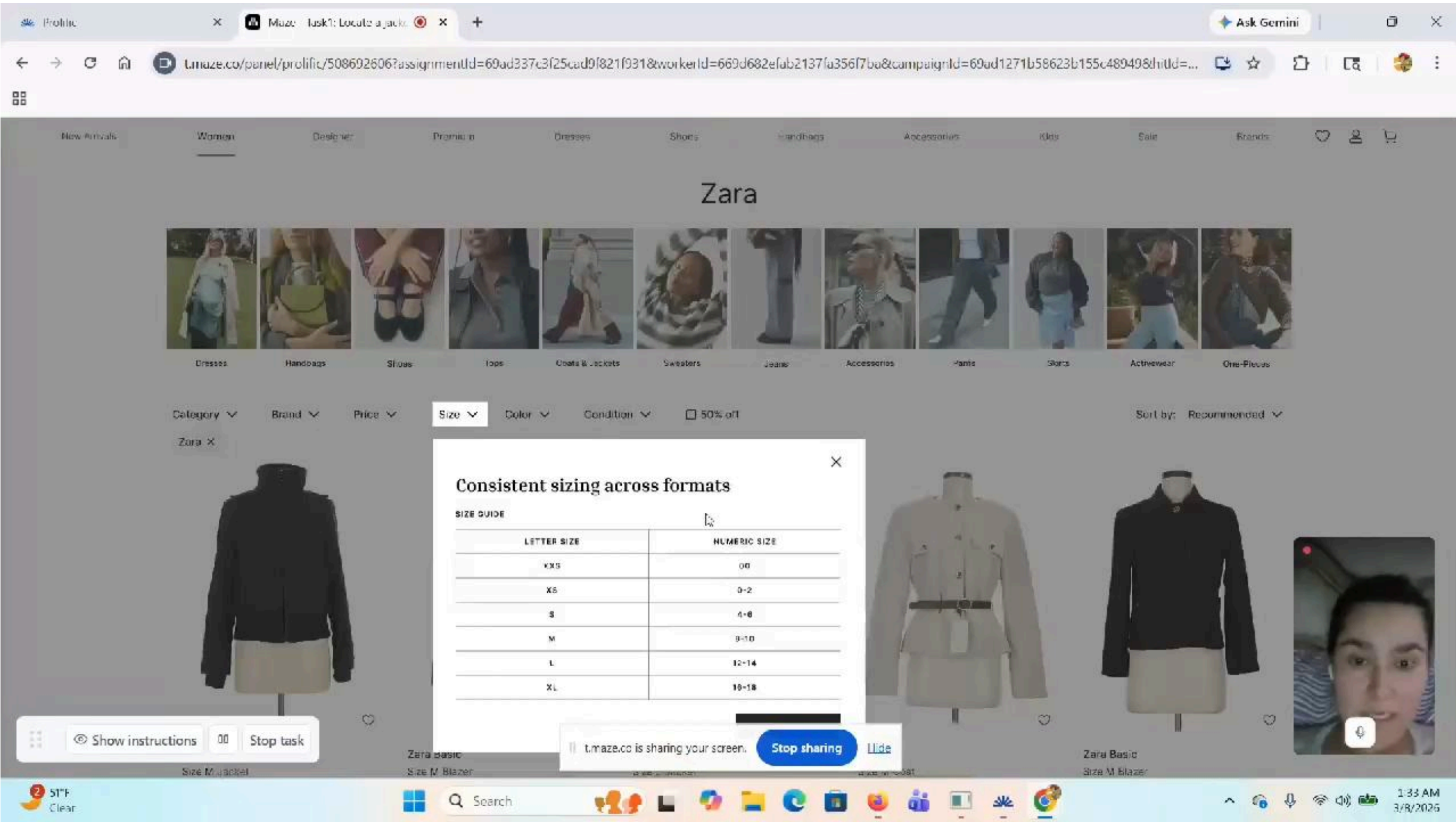
Users who used filters with fewer size options hesitated less and located the required size more quickly.

#3 **Horizontal Filters Improved Visibility**

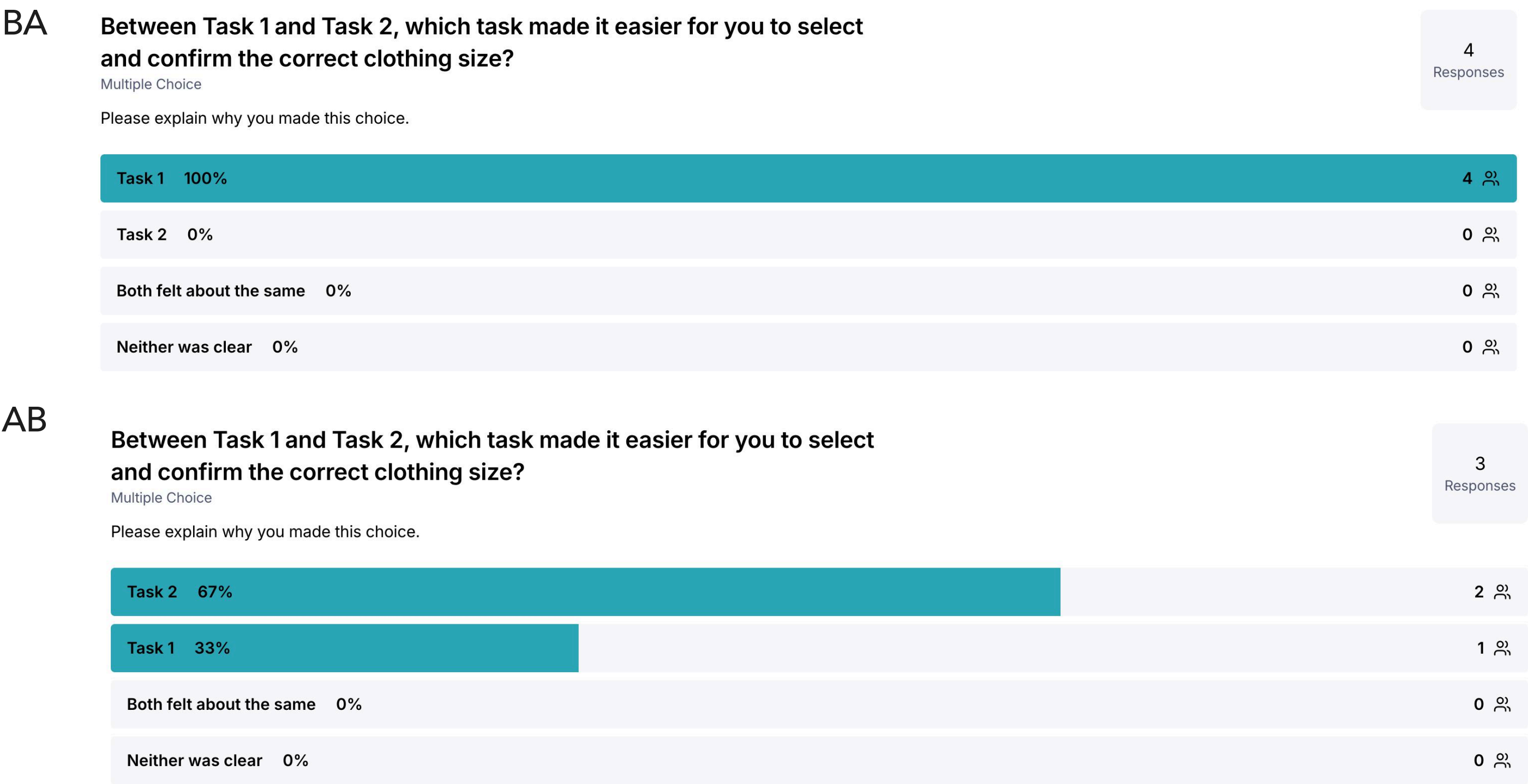
10/12 participants used the filter. The two participants who did not use it were affected by network issues, misclicks, or prototype limitations

9/12 participants discovered or applied the size filter.

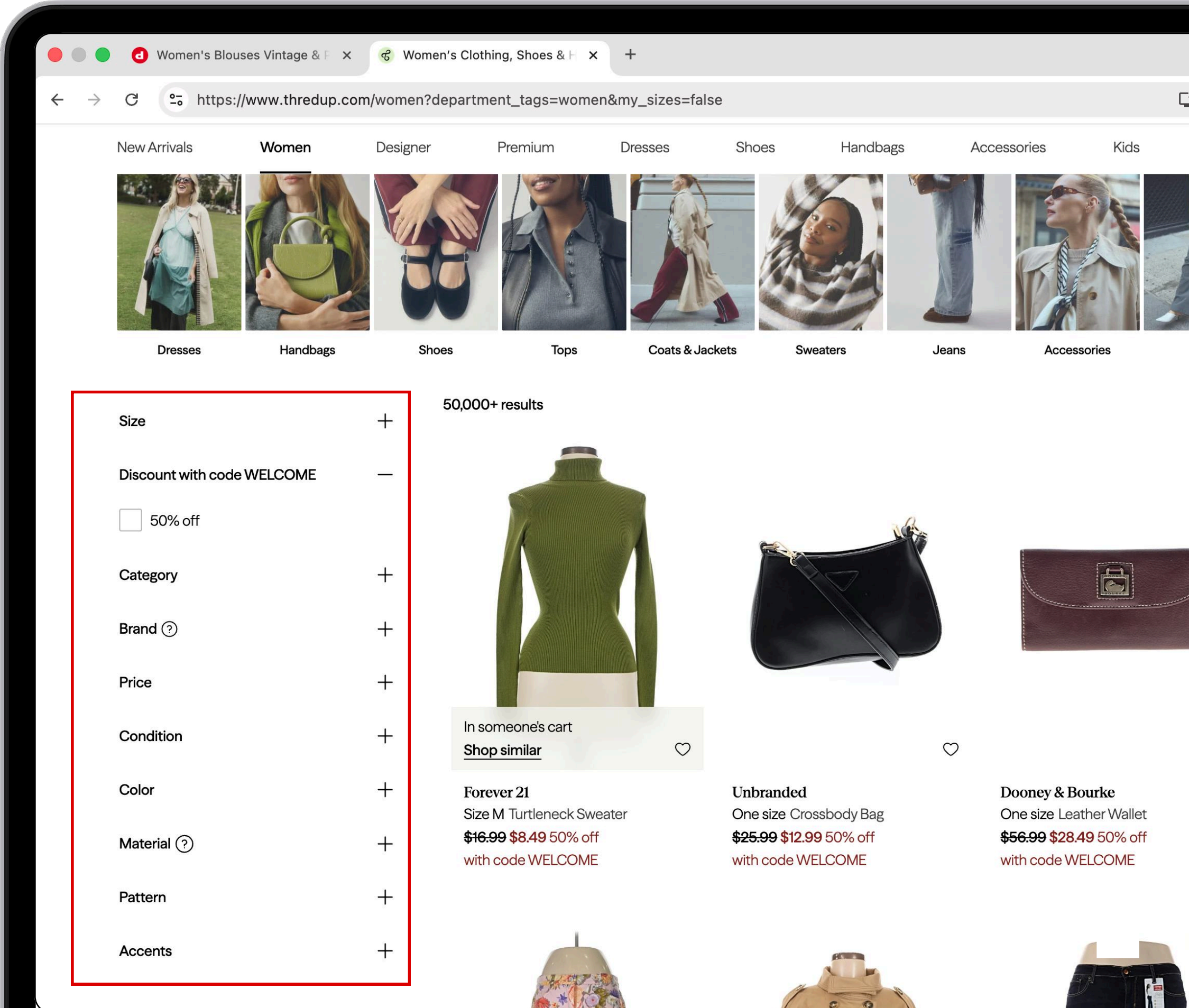
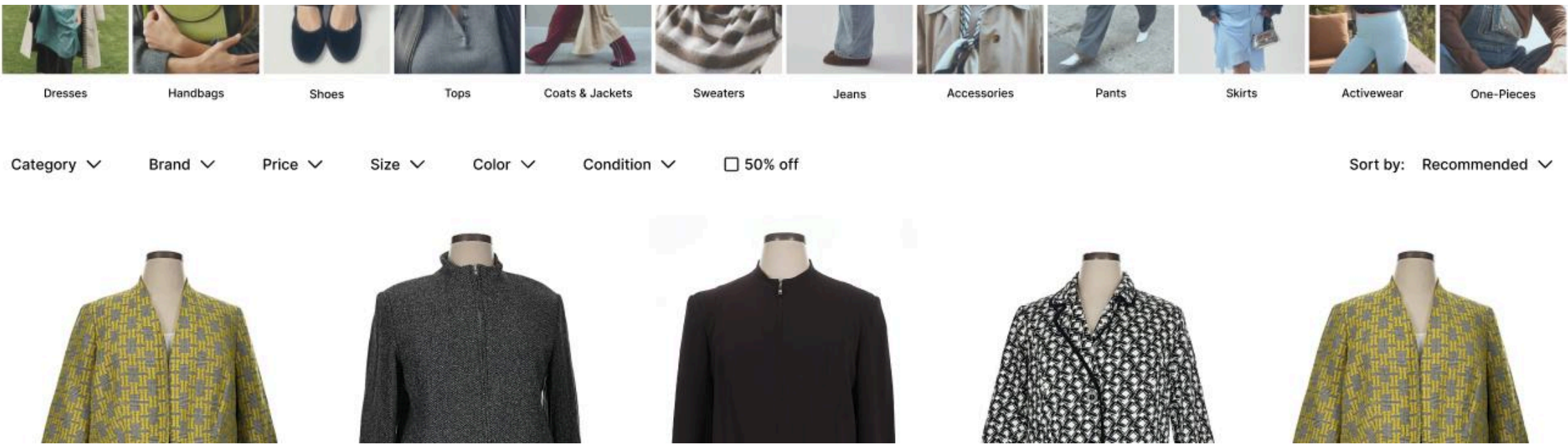
Onboarding is not for everyone, if onboarding is used, participants tend to prefer a clear guide.



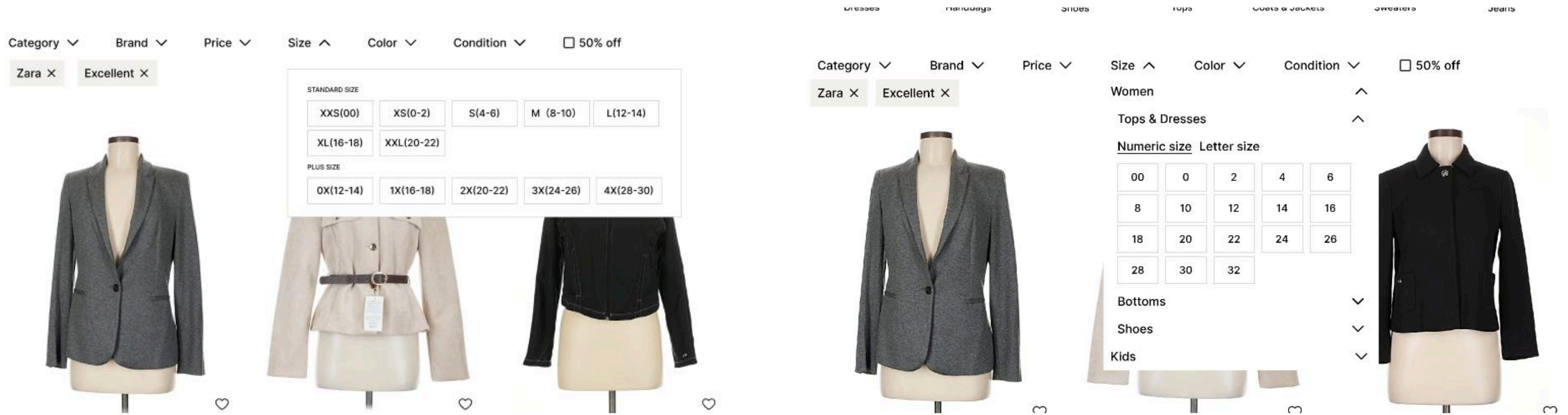
5/6 participants hesitated less and reported that using size filters in Task B was better



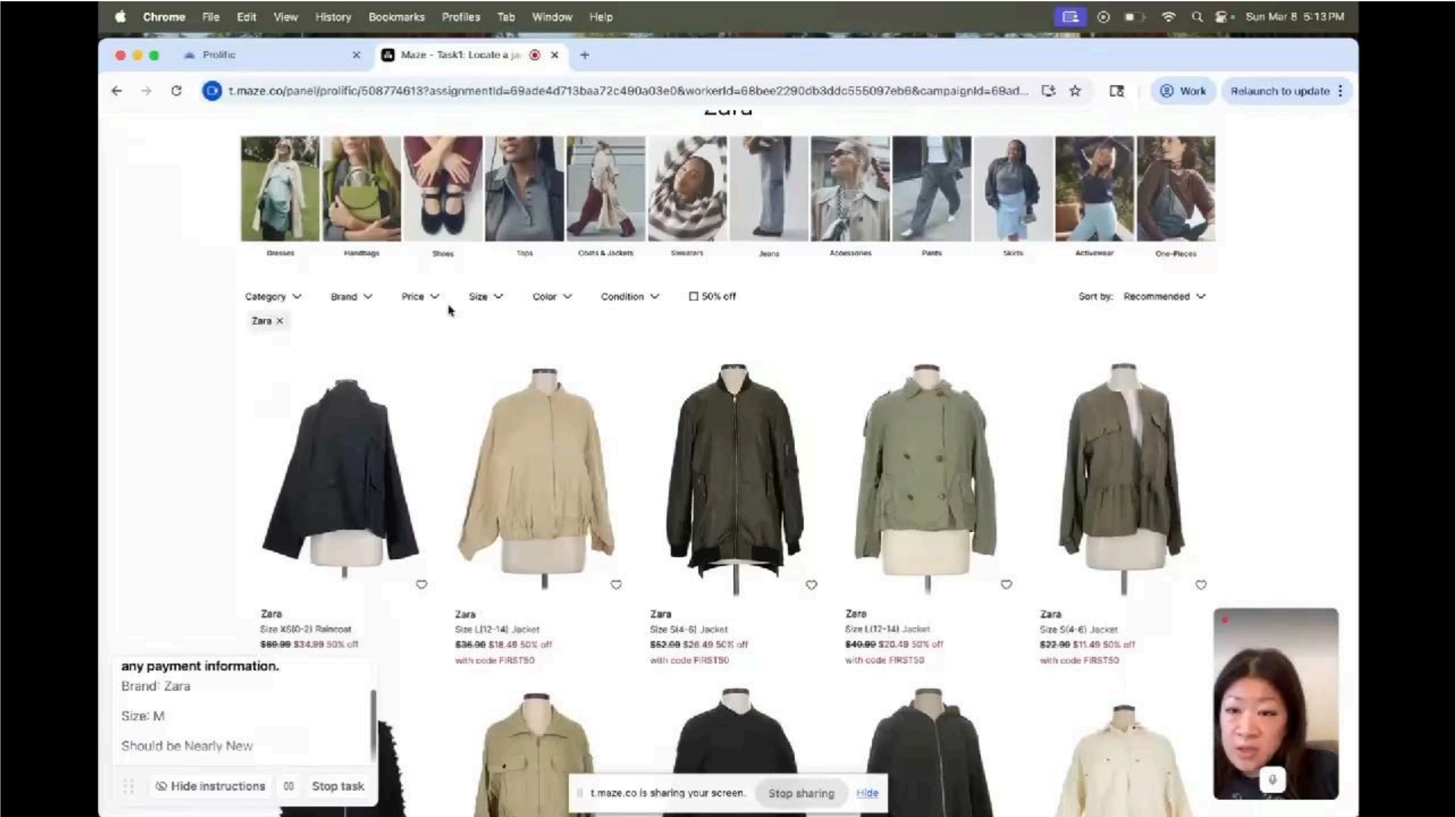
Horizontal filters improved visibility, with 10/12 participants using filters and 9/12 successfully discovering or applying the size filter.



Fewer size options reduced complexity, helping users locate the correct size more quickly and with less hesitation.



UNMODERATED FINDINGS



Executive Summary

ThredUp Usability Synthesis

Key Cross-Participant Patterns

EVIDENCE : [HIGHLIGHT REELS](#)

Information Architecture Friction

FINDING :
Participants Frequently Bypassed Navigation And Relied On Search Due To Unclear Category Structure.

In **moderated** testing, 7/10 participants skipped global navigation entirely.

Unmoderated testing showed that users also **relied heavily on search** rather than browsing categories when attempting to locate products.

MATCH BETWEEN SYSTEM AND THE REAL WORLD

Filter Discoverability Issues

4/10 **moderated participants** initially failed to **locate the size filter** due to the scroll-dependent vertical filter panel.

Unmoderated testing indicated that filters were easier to locate when presented in a horizontal filter bar rather than a vertically stacked sidebar layout.

VISIBILITY OF SYSTEM STATUS /
RECOGNITION RATHER THAN RECALL

Size System Confusion

FINDING :
Participants Hesitated When Interpreting Size Filters Because Standard Sizes, Numeric Sizes, And Plus Sizes Were Presented Together In One Long Scrollable List.

In moderated testing, several participants paused to interpret the size options before applying filters.

Unmoderated testing further showed that users struggled to quickly identify which size labels applied to them.

VISIBILITY OF SYSTEM STATUS /
ERROR PREVENTION

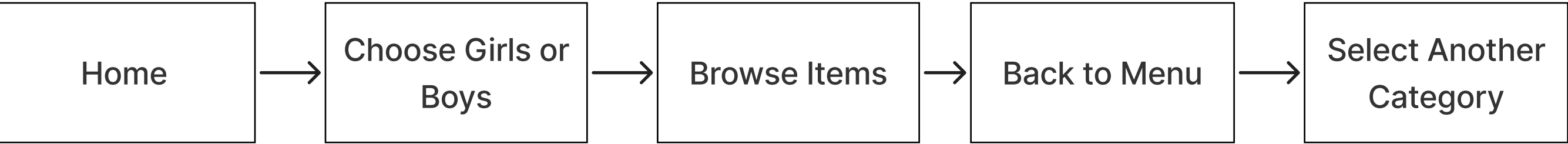
Strategic Product Insight: ThredUp’s interface increases cognitive effort during product discovery due to unclear navigation structure, limited filter visibility, and inconsistent size representation.

Design Direction: Improve navigation clarity, surface filters earlier in the interface, and reorganize size systems to better align with users’ mental models.

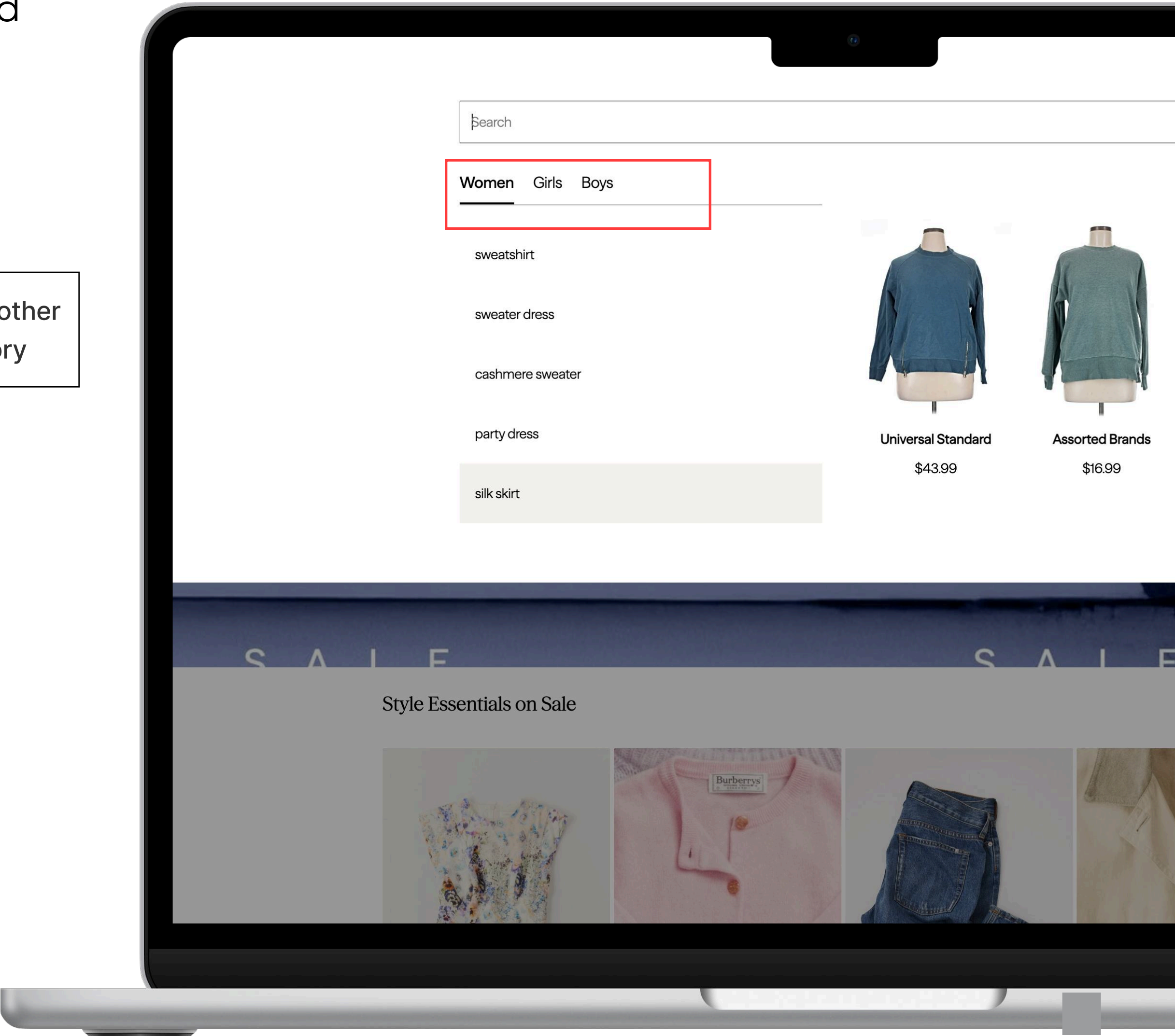
Design Evolution

Navigation Structure -Before

Participants hesitated when locating children's clothing categories and explored multiple gendered paths before finding relevant items.

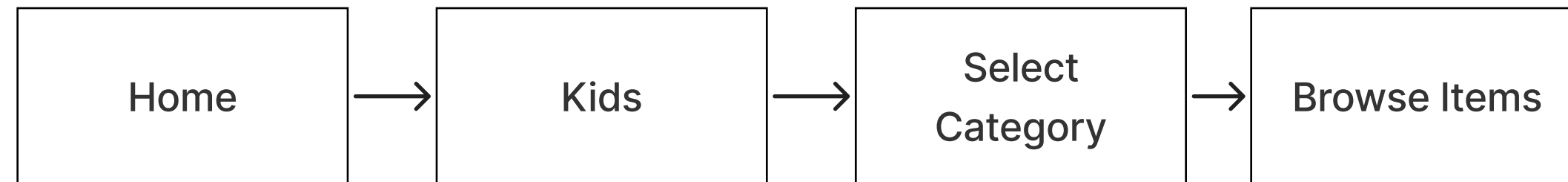


- Users must guess which gender category contains the desired item.

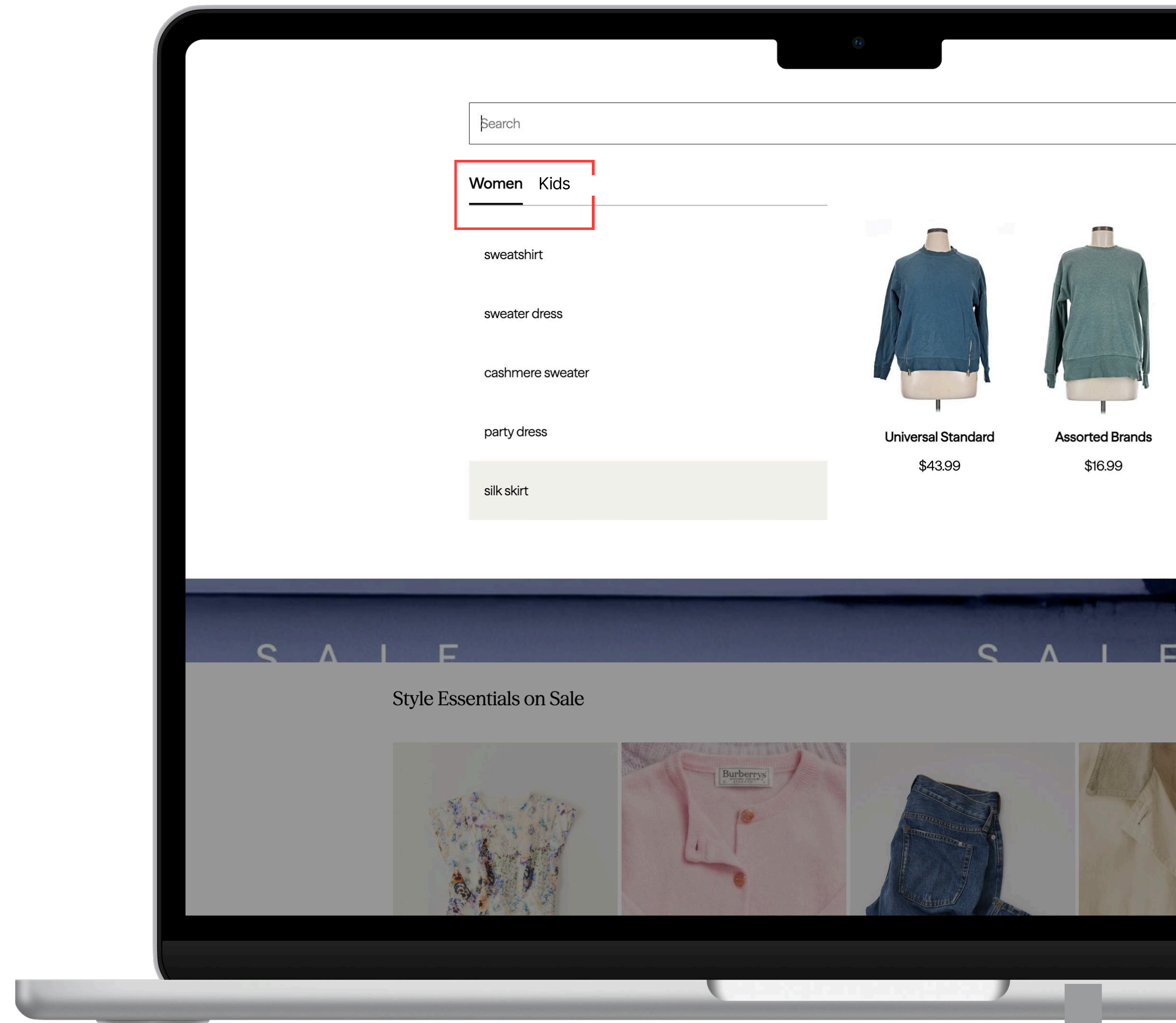


Navigation Structure -After

Aligns category organization with common household shopping behavior and reduces navigation hesitation.

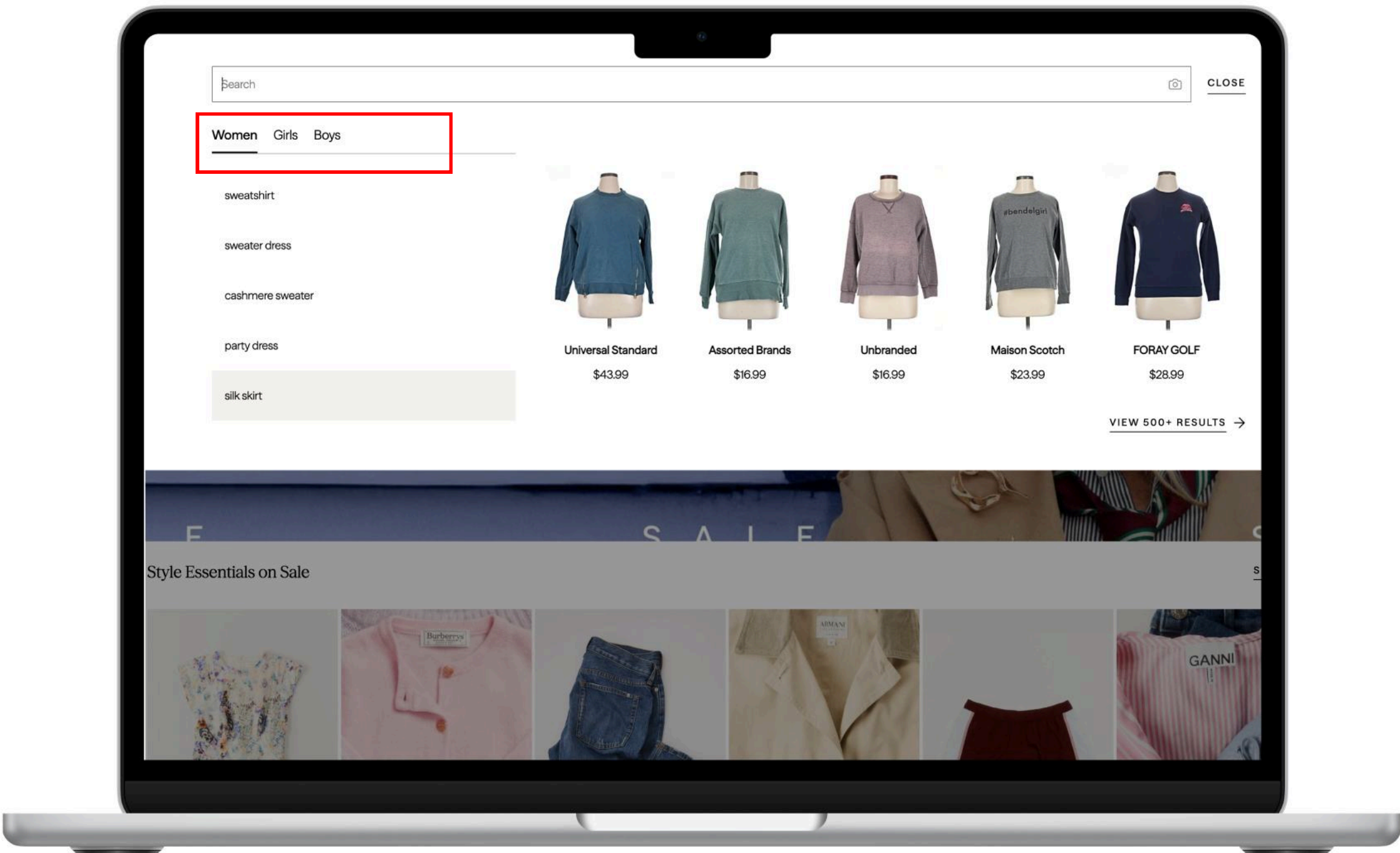


- Single entry point for children's clothing
- Reduced navigation uncertainty
- Fewer exploration steps



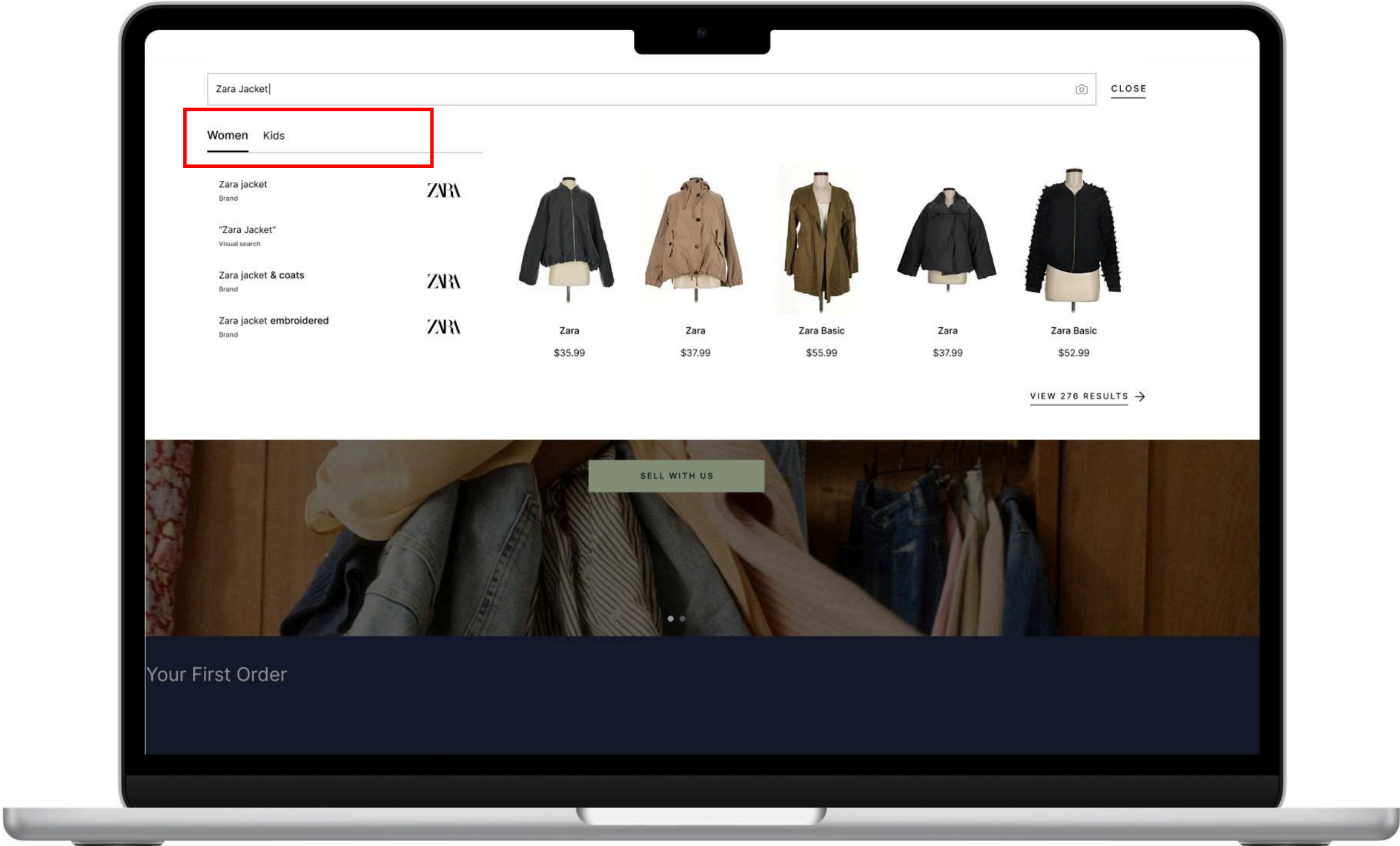
Navigation Structure -Before & After

Before:



Separate **Girls and Boys** categories with no unified entry for children's items.

After:



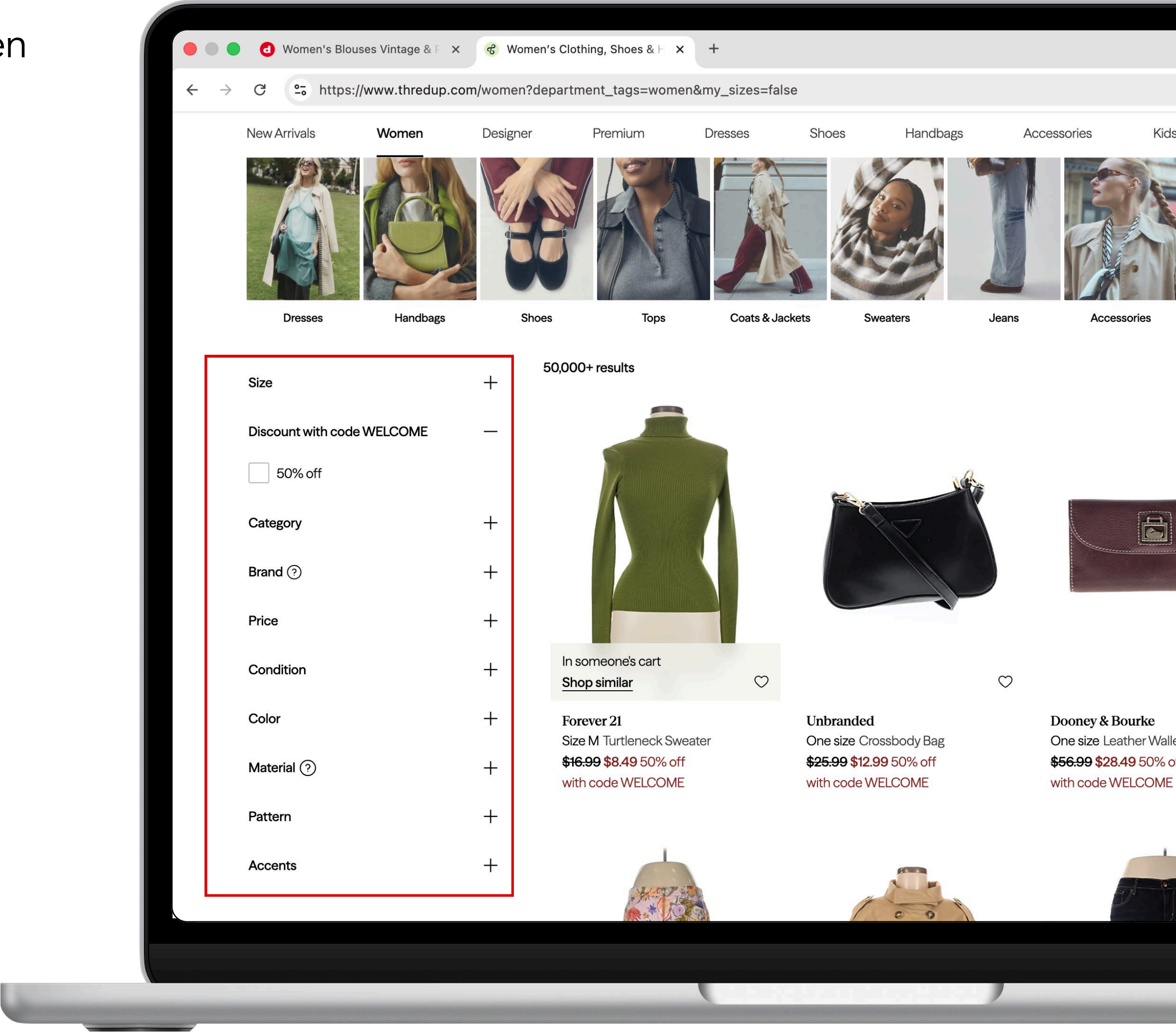
Introduced a unified Kids category with clearly structured sub-entries.

Filter Discoverability -Before

Users demonstrated hesitation when refining product results and often scrolled through listings before locating filtering options.

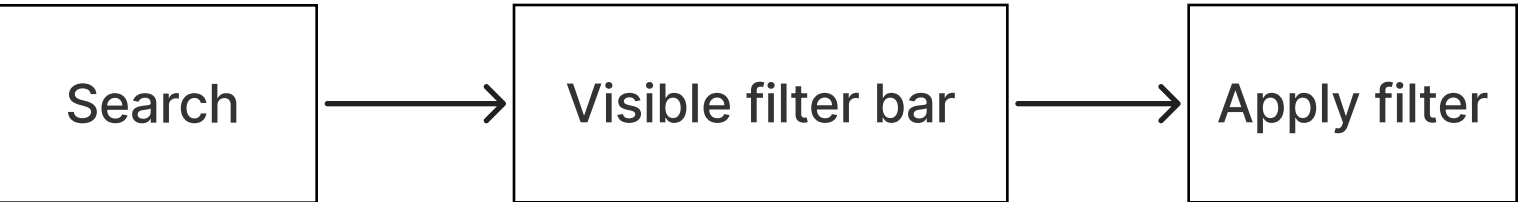


- Filters are hidden and require additional interaction effort.

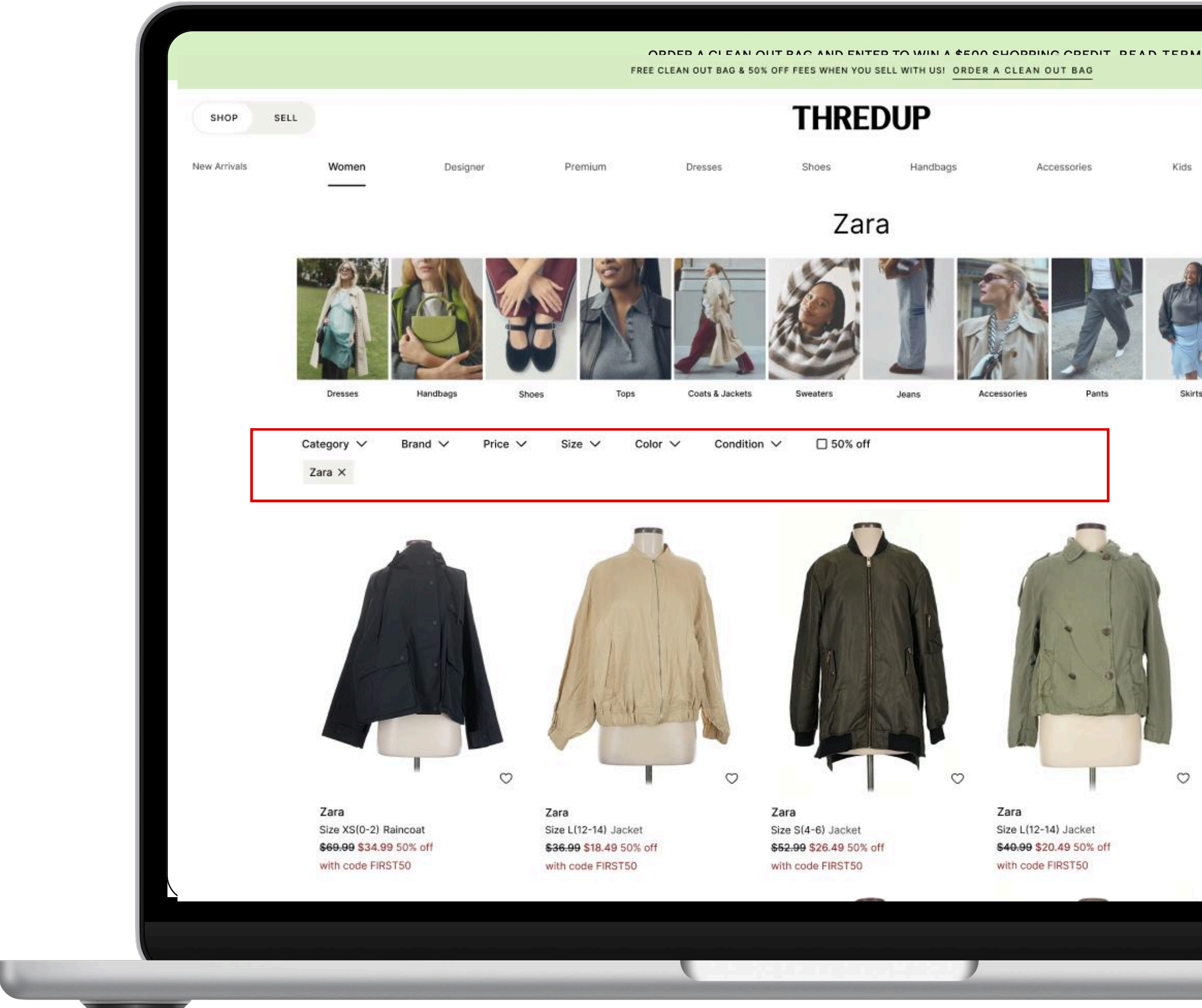


Filter Discoverability -After

Exposing key filtering options earlier in the browsing process reduces interaction cost and improves filter discoverability.

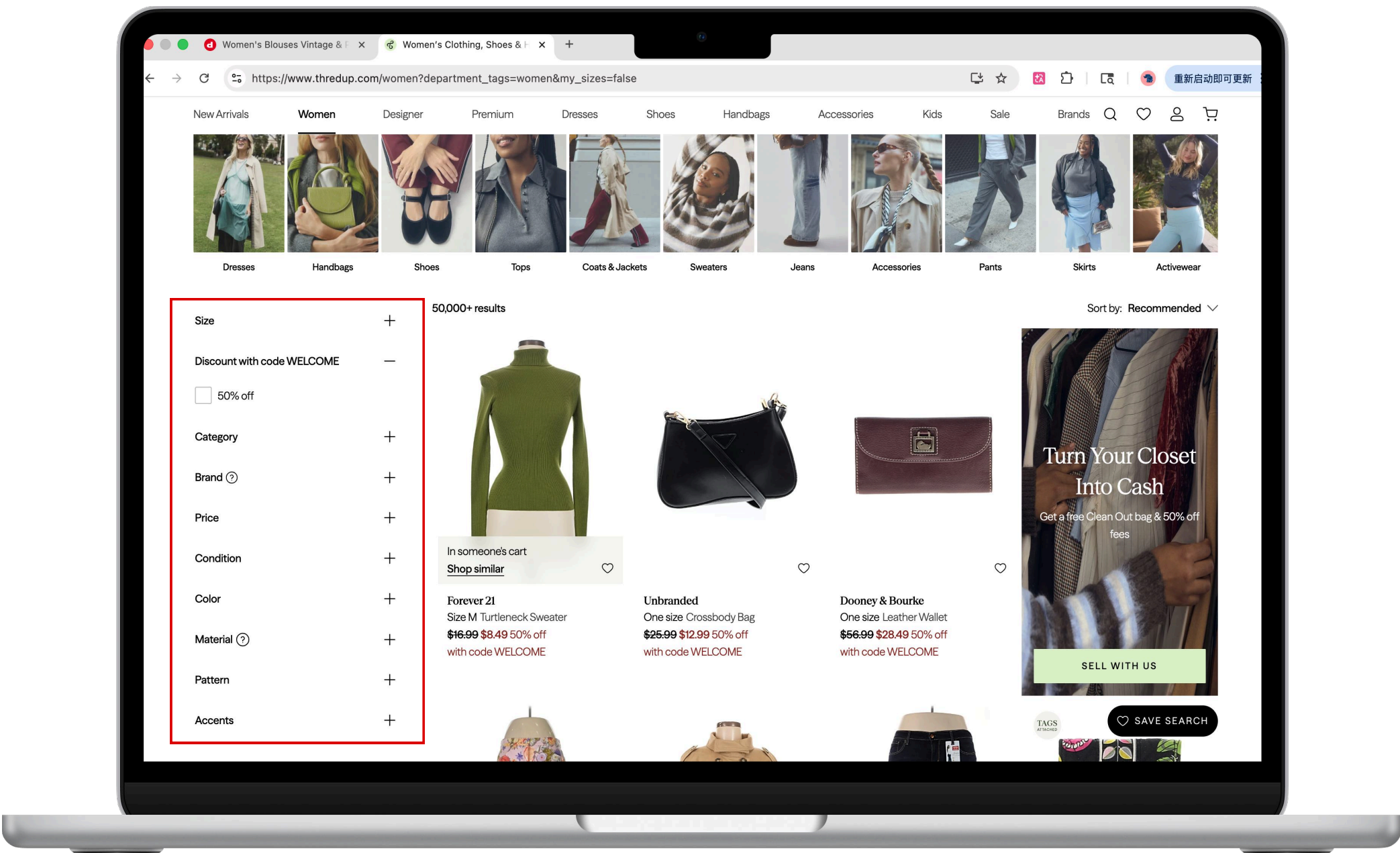


- Filters become immediately accessible.



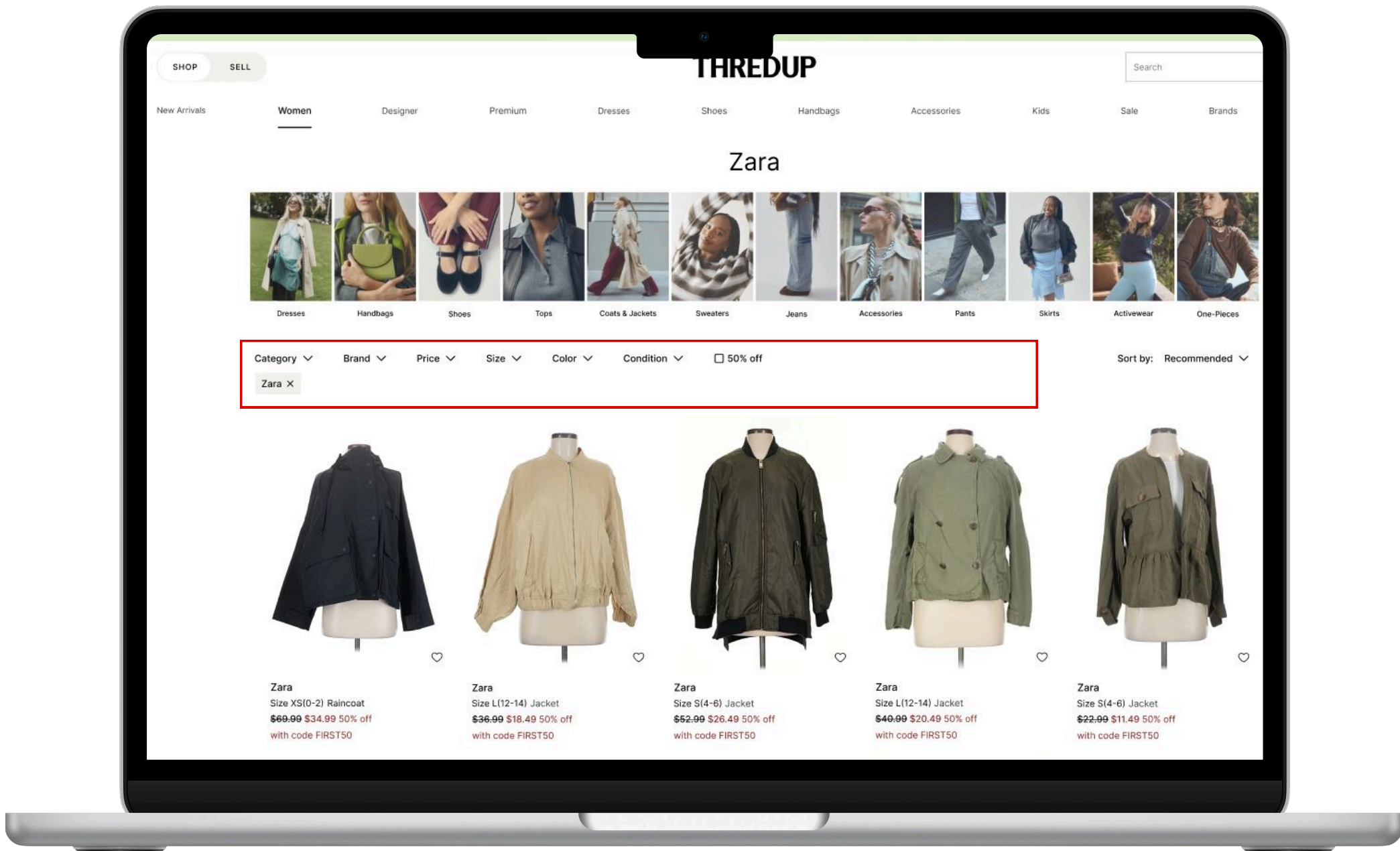
Filter Discoverability -Before & After

Before:



Filters were placed in a vertical side panel, requiring **additional scrolling and interaction** before users could refine product results.

After:

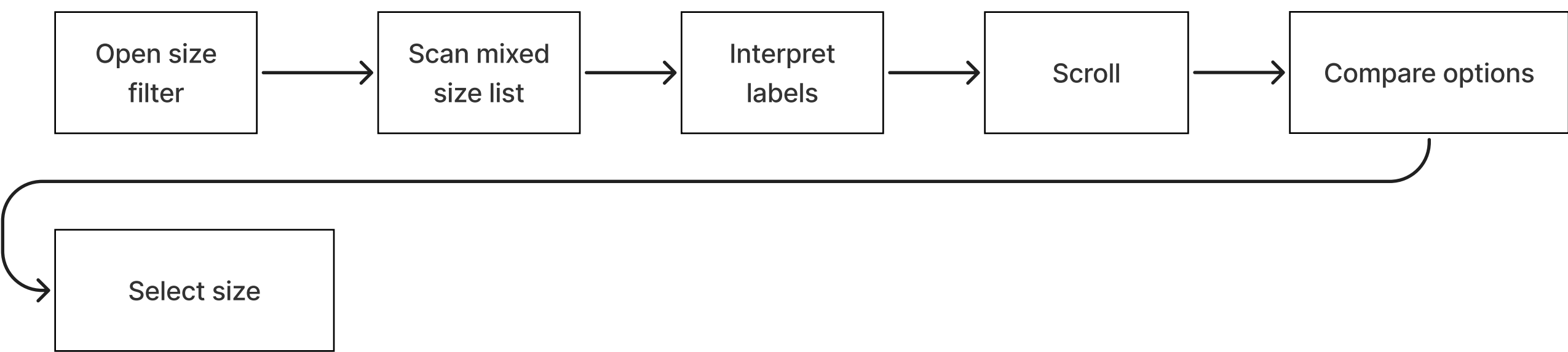


Primary filters are now displayed in a horizontal bar below the search field, **improving discoverability and enabling faster refinement.**

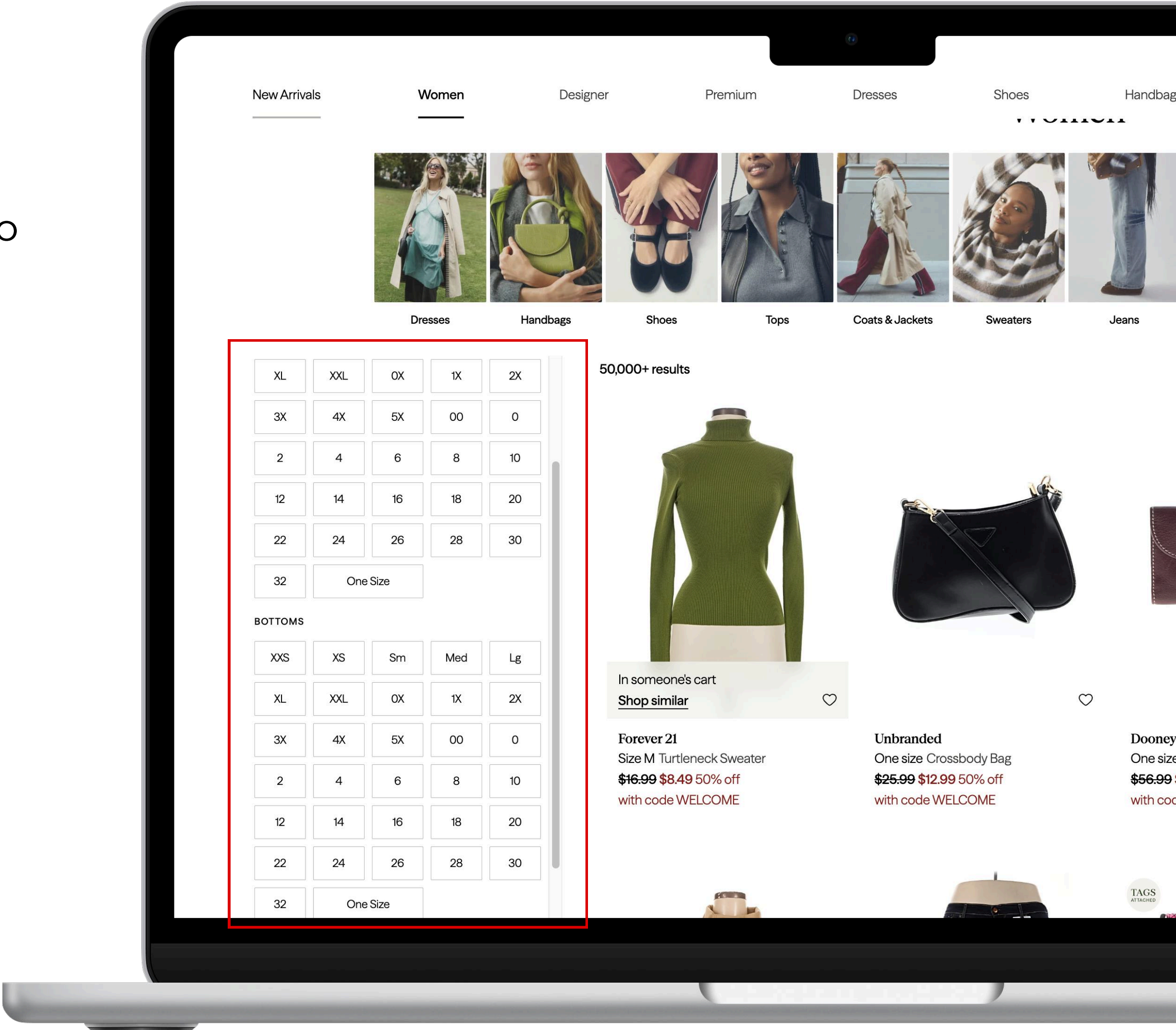
Size Clarity -Before

Participants hesitated when interpreting size options because letter sizes, numeric sizes, and plus sizes were presented together in one long filter list.

This made it harder to quickly understand which size group applied to them.

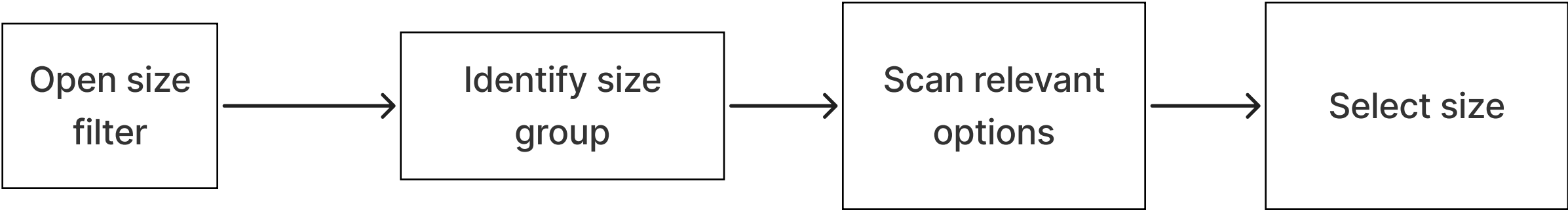


- Users must decode multiple sizing systems within one continuous list.

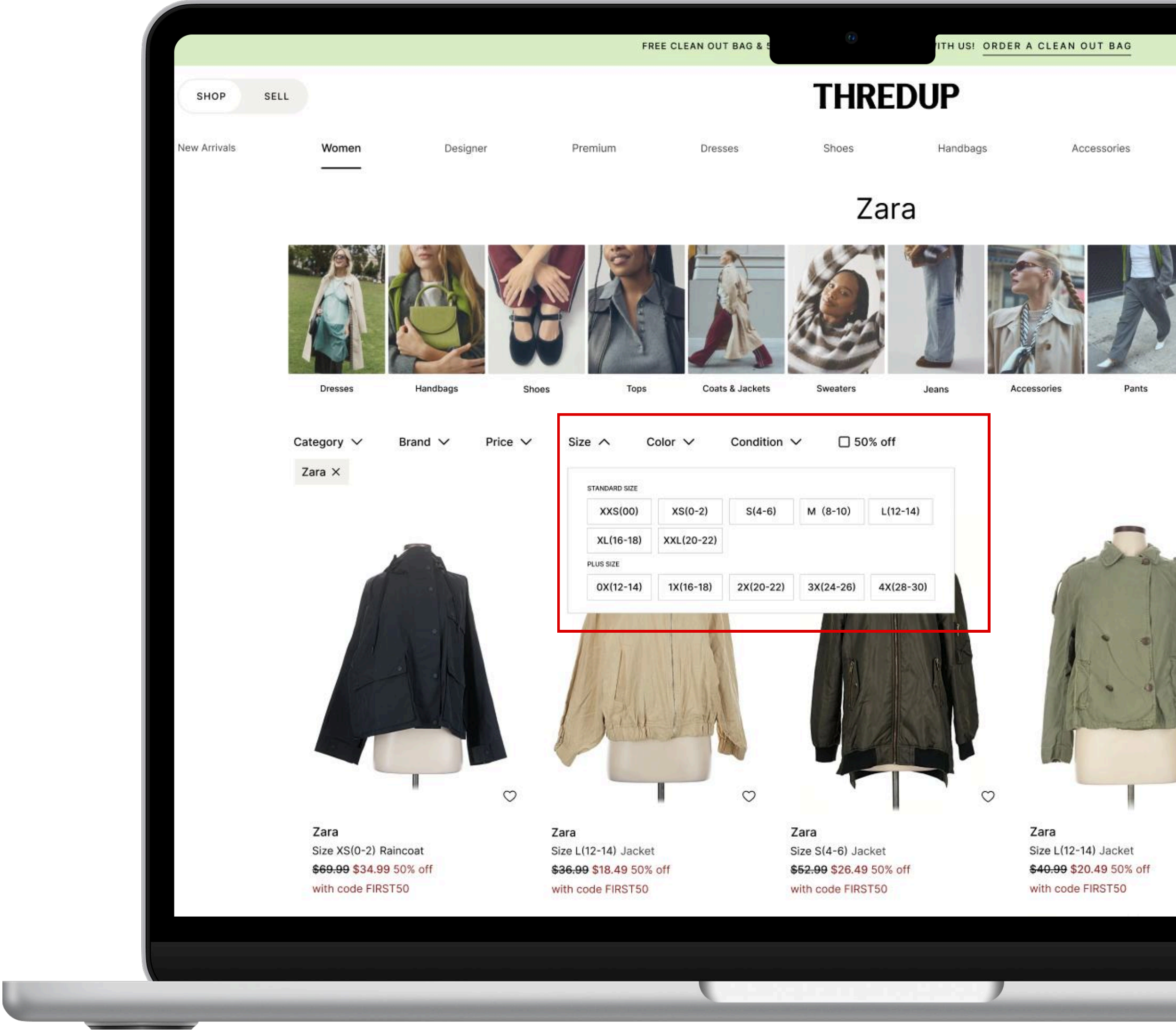


Size Clarity -After

Separating standard and plus-size options into clearly labeled groups improves scanability, reduces ambiguity, and helps users identify relevant sizes more confidently.

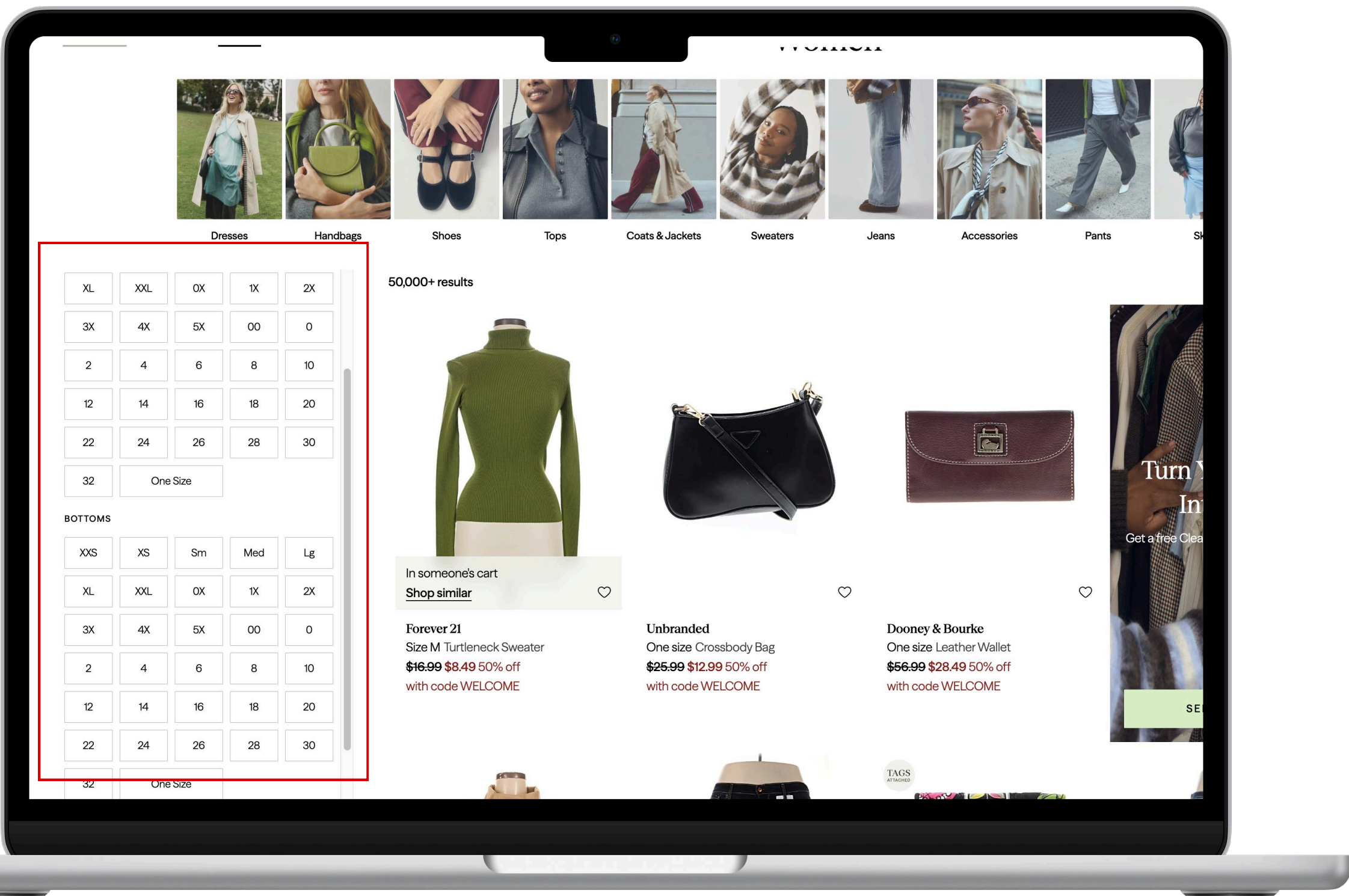


- Grouped presentation reduces interpretation effort.



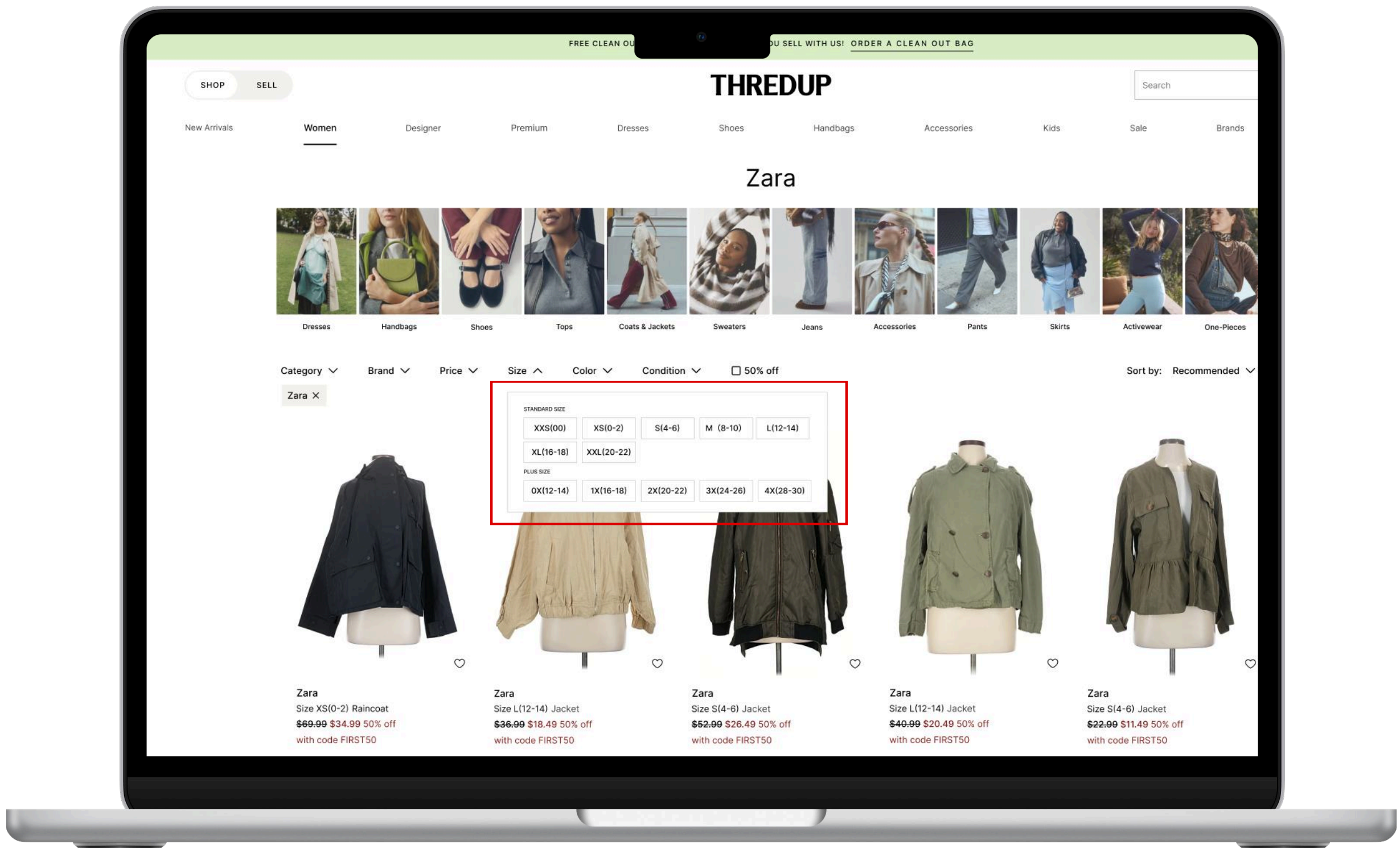
Size Clarity -Before & After

Before:



Size options were displayed in one **mixed list**, combining **standard, numeric, and plus-size labels** in a long scrollable panel.

After:



Sizes were reorganized into **clearly labeled** Standard Size and Plus Size groups, making size categories easier to scan and interpret.

Appendix

1. Participant grid (moderated + unmoderated)
2. Session recordings and highlight clips
3. Transcripts or summaries (AI-generated or manual)
4. Observation notes and synthesis artifacts
5. Heuristic evaluation and severity ratings
6. Research plans and protocols
7. Testing prototype links.