



# Accessing China's E-Commerce Explosion 进入中国电子商务的爆炸时代

Swiss companies in both B2B and B2C sectors have much to gain from China's large and fast growing e-commerce sector.

by **Mark Andrews**

China is the world's largest e-commerce market. Retail sales online in 2015 amounted to US\$589 billion an increase of a third over the previous year. This year's Singles Day online shopping sale on November 11 managed to surpass the sales of the US's Cyber Monday in less than two hours. Sales reached a staggering \$17.8 billion. With offline sales growth appearing sluggish online transactions made up 13% of total retail sales last year and they are growing at nearly three times the rate of traditional retailers.

Unlike more developed countries China still has a far more fragmented retail market with major chains often confined to only the most developed cities, with a corresponding lack of consolidation amongst distribution channels. Weak bricks and mortar services along with an increased access to information, has created consumer demand for products which in many lower-tier cities are simply unavailable or very expensive to purchase. E-retailers, particularly Taobao and Tmall from Alibaba, have filled that void and are now easily available to the 720 million consumers online, who securely purchase with online payment systems such as Alipay, China's equivalent to Paypal.

## Going mobile

Chinese are culturally very hard working and with this comes less time to go shopping. The convenience of ordering online has become part of the Chinese lifestyle, and with deep smart phone penetration in the country

在 B2B 和 B2C 领域，瑞士公司还有很多的东西要向中国巨大且快速增长的电子商务产业学习。

作者：**Mark Andrews**

中国拥有世界上最大的电子商务市场。2015 年零售业销量达到了 5,890 亿美元。今年的“双十一”网上交易额在开始两小时内旋即超过了美国的 Cyber Monday。总销售额达到了一个令人瞠目结舌的数字：178 亿美元。相较于线下销售增长疲软，去年网上交易量占了整个零售业销售的 13%，增长速度几乎是传统零售业的三倍。

不像其他的发达国家，中国还有许多零碎分散的零售市场，主要的产业链集中在最发达的城市，但与之相应的，欠缺能够发挥凝聚力的渠道商。日渐式微的实体店服务与日益增长的信息渠道，都创造了顾客对于产品的需求，尤其是在许多不发达的城市很难买到或者很贵的商品。电子商务零售商，尤其是阿里巴巴集团旗下的淘宝，天猫，填补了这个空白。72,000 亿消费者很容易在网上找到他们想买的商品，并且使用中国版本的 paypal：网上安全付款担保系统支付宝，进行支付。

## 移动手机化

辛勤劳动是中国人的工作文化，相应的他们去购物的时间则较少。网上购物的便利成就了中国人

that means shopping is increasingly on mobile platforms. Of the US\$17.8 billion raked in by Alibaba on Singles Day, 82% of the purchases were made using mobile devices. "E-commerce in China is definitely among the most advanced globally, because the Chinese have bypassed the PC stage, and these days everybody has a mobile," says Wong Siew Loong, President of Kuehne + Nagel's North Asia Pacific Region.

### Benefit of being Swiss

For Swiss companies this offers a unique advantage. Critical to growth in e-commerce is overcoming the distrust of locally produced goods and Swiss products have a good reputation. "Swiss companies do have something that works for them: strong country branding. Chinese consumers associate Switzerland with a clean environment and superior quality," says Tong Li, founder and CEO of Yoopay, China's leading event management e-commerce website.

This is not just true for the consumer goods segment; it also provides opportunities in B2B in which the large Swiss SME sector excels. "Chinese companies now are looking for better parts and ingredients from suppliers, especially in the chemicals sector. E-Commerce is making it much easier and quicker for them to acquire the right product they want, and there will be a tougher time for trading companies going forwards, as Chinese firms want to go straight to the producers," says Wan Yuchen an analyst at China Market Research. "And most e-commerce platforms still focus more on



Wong Siew Loong  
Kuehne + Nagel

的生活方式，伴随着智能手机的使用在这个国度的深层次渗透，购物已经在手机平台变得易如反掌。178 亿美元的“双十一”销售额中，82% 的交易是在手机端完成的。“电子商务在中国已经跨过了电脑端的时代，如今几乎每人都有一部手机”。Kuehne + Nagel 的北亚太市场主席 Wong Siew Loong 如是说。

### 瑞士的优势

对于瑞士公司，如今形势有利。对于中国本地生产的商品的怀疑态度和瑞士产品享有优良的声誉生过了中国消费者对电商的辩证态度。“瑞士公司有很多值得引以为傲的闪光点：国家的良好品牌形象。中国顾客总会将瑞士同清洁的环境和优秀的品质

联系在一起。”中国活动管理电商网站的佼佼者 Yoopay 的创始人 Li Tong 评价道。

不仅是在消费品市场，瑞士中小型企业 B2B 领域也很具竞争力。“中国公司如今寻找更好的配件和原料，尤其是在化学行业。电子商务让一切都变得方便快捷，短时间内能生产出他们所需的产品，贸易公司可能会有一段较难捱的时期，因为很多中国公司希望直接拿到产品”，中国市场调研专员 Wan Yuchen 如此分析到，“大多数的电子商务平台仍然关注点在顾客的市场上，

**Lindt LINDOR**

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the consumer market, so it makes it comparatively easier for foreign companies to do well in the B2B space."

There are a number of key differences between the B2B and B2C models. "A B2B model prioritises key products and works to ensure a reliable, trustworthy supply chain," says Daisy Song, CEO of Fields, an online supermarket. "Whereas with B2C a seamless experience is the most important element, service reliability is the most important for B2B with other requirements such as financing facilities playing a significant role."

With many Swiss companies being SMEs concentrated on manufacturing, developing an online strategy is becoming essential. "Foreign B2B companies need to localise for the Chinese market, understand how to operate in China and deliver what Chinese companies want," says Wan. "In many cases, because of their cross-border experience, foreign companies have better opportunities than local players, as they have more global perspectives and footprints." Lucas Rondez, CEO of Hangzhou Boru Network Technology Co. Ltd, creator of the popular Nihao app, agrees. "People here can't always manage to find everything they want in China. This can bring a lot of opportunities for Swiss companies because Chinese consumers are now looking for quality products and ones that can only be found abroad."

## What model?

The type of business model used for the Chinese market also has a large impact on the bottom-line success of an e-commerce programme. "To be successful a business must have a sustainable business model. However, many e-commerce companies operating in China rely too much on a discount-led incentive model," says Song. "Fields chose a consumer-oriented model where it focused on meeting the demands of the customer. This meant focusing on a good product range, quality, traceability and transparency."

In China, setting up an e-commerce gateway typically consists of using a basic website, a mobile optimised website, an app, or a store on WeChat or Tmall. There are also social media platforms such as Weibo and WeChat that allow purchases to be made whilst engaging with current and prospective customers. The route chosen is largely dictated by whether the company is in the B2B or B2C space, but, whichever, mobile is increasingly critical. In China 630 million people access the internet via their phones making mobile the dominant area when it comes to B2C e-commerce. "To be mobile is essential, but not necessarily by an app, a mobile version of a website works pretty well as it can be linked to a lot of platforms like WeChat," says Rondez. "To go the app route is costly, but it does make the platform look more credible and serious for people here," says Pauline Houli, CEO of Club Elysee, a specialist online sales website that offers European luxury fashion to Chinese consumers at bargain prices. "Unless an app has a clear benefit for people's everyday lives they are unlikely to download and install it. It is often better to just have a responsive website."

Another route that some foreign companies are finding productive is working with local partners. This may simply be operating with local agents in China to better handle the



**Daisy Song**  
Fields

所以对于外国公司来说在 B2B 市场相对容易。"

B2B 和 B2C 模式有许多差异。

"B2B 模式的特点是: 优先配置拳头产品和服务, 保证一个可以信赖的, 稳定的供应链", 网上超市 Fields 的 CEO, Daisy Song 认为: "当无缝链接的体验成为 B2C 成功最重要的因素, 可靠的服务是重中之重, 和融资机制一起扮演重要的作用。"

诸多瑞士中小企业集聚在制造业, 发展网上策略成为当务之急。"B2B 公司需要为中国市场实现本土化, 要了解如何同中国伙伴合作和中国公司的需求," Wan 如是说。"通常情况下, 由于跨境经验丰富, 外国公司都比本土公司拥有更多的机遇, 因为他们有更多国际视角和经验。" Lucas Rondez, 杭州博如网络科技有限公司

的 CEO, Nihao 应用的发明者, 也十分赞同这个说法。"中国消费者很难在国内买到他们想要的一切东西。这给许多的瑞士企业带来了商机, 因为中国消费者现在需要很多优质的商品, 尤其是只能在海外买到的。"

## 何种模式?

在中国市场采用什么样的商业模式也对电子商务项目的成功有很大的影响。"要想获得商业的成功需要一个稳定的商业模式。但是, 许多的电子商务公司在中国过于依赖打折促销模式," 宋评价道。"Fields 选择了以顾客为中心的模式, 也就是说我们会以消费者的需求为导向。这意味着我们会致力于提供优良的产品范畴, 产品质量, 物流追踪和消费透明度。"

在中国, 新兴电子商务的途径常包括基础的网站, 手机端优化的网页, 手机应用或者微店或天猫淘宝店。微博和微信上都有支付通道可以满足当前和潜在的顾客。具体的选择多半是由公司是 B2B 或 B2C 领域来决定的, 并且, 手机移动

端的增长惊人。在中国有 6.3 亿人可以使用手机上网, 尤其是在 B2C 商务领域。

"当手机变得很重要, 并不一定要有专门的手机应用, 一个网站的手机版功能就十分齐全, 还可以导入微信等平台。" Rondez 说, "制作手机应用成本高昂, 但是这也让平台在中国人看来更加值得信赖。致力于将欧洲奢侈品时尚以实惠的价格带给中国消费者的网站, Club Elysee 的总裁 Pauline Houli 说, "除非使用一个手机应用对于人们的日常生活有很显著的利益, 不然消费者真的不太会下载和使



**Cédric Antonio**  
Collège du Léman Sàrl

local bureaucracy and culture as does the Swiss international school, Collège du Léman Sàrl. “Parents of pupils prefer to use local agents as they can help with the paperwork requirements,” says the school’s senior marketing & communication manager, Cédric Antonio. “Adapting to the country’s policies concerning online barriers such as the blocking of Facebook and other social media platforms, can be challenging in the sense that you cannot communicate as easily as you do in other countries. Also, you cannot simply lift your offering from another market and make it work in China. The internet in China simply does not work in the same way as in the rest of the world. Not just because some internationally used websites are blocked, but also due to local market preference for certain social media channels. Collège du Léman uses its local partners to overcome these communication problems.”

In the B2B sector, a good example of a successful local collaboration is Swiss company Dividella. “Dividella is a medical equipment manufacturer that partnered with a local Chinese company to sell into China giving them access to their local partner’s sales channels,” says China Market Research’s Wan. “The key thing for foreign companies is to combine their advanced technology with local know-how.”

One such area in which local expectations are different is delivery times. Unlike in many developed countries consumers are not prepared to wait anything more than two or three days for delivery, and expect to be able to track the progress of their delivery. This puts pressure on logistics firms to meet these tight timetables, but offers opportunities for Swiss companies, that excel and have a strong reputation in dependable logistics services. When it comes to perishable goods this is even more important. “Established standard operating procedures across the chain are imperative,” says Fields’ Daisy Song. “This includes the design of the warehouse, multi-level temperature control and a complete cold chain solution, the packing environment, the kind of packaging used and efficient delivery shifts throughout the day. There are obvious attractions to the Chinese market of Swiss food producers because of Switzerland’s reputation for a clean, well-regulated environment, but getting the supply chain right is still a crucially important element for successfully selling food by e-channels.”

Of course the Chinese market is very competitive, but for Swiss companies who get it right the rewards are substantial. So far, foreign companies with a reputation for better quality (and more expensive) goods do appear to be doing well in China’s fast growing e-commerce market. And the money to be made is mouthwatering. This year’s Singles Day underlined the willingness of Chinese consumers to purchase from foreign companies when 37% of purchases were made from international brands or merchants: that’s US\$6.6 billion of sales in a single day. ○

用。所以通常有一个相应的网站会更好。”

另外一个有效方法是选择同当地伙伴合作。当地的代理商可大大优化企业的运营成本，能够更好地解决当地的官僚主义和文化差异问题，瑞士的国际学校 Collège du Léman Sàrl. 就是一个例子。“学生家长喜欢依赖当地的中介机构，因为他们可以帮忙应对诸多文书的繁文缛节，”该校的资深市场和交际经理 Cédric Antonio 说：“要适应中国针对网上交易的政策贸易壁垒，例如封锁 Facebook 和其他国外的社交媒体挺有挑战性的，因为你会发现在中国与外界的联系不如在世界上其他地方那么容易。Collège du Léman 依靠中国合作伙伴解决了这些通讯上的问题。”

在 B2B 领域，瑞士公司与中国当地公司合作的优良典范可以参照 Dividella。

“Dividella 是一家医疗设备生产商，同中国的企业合作，利用中国的渠道商进行销售。”中国市场研究专员 Wan 说，“有一点很关键，外国公司如何把他们的先进科技和中国当地的专利技术相结合。”

在 B2B 领域，物流花费的时间显得尤为重要。不像许多发达国家，消费者并没有足够的耐心等上超过 2-3 天，而且要求能够实时追踪物流信息。这让当地物流公司在截止日期前将货物按时送到的压力倍增，但同时也给瑞士公司提供了巨大的机遇，因为后者出众的品质和物流的可靠性，尤其在运送易腐烂货物时显得尤为重要。“设定贯穿整个产业链的物流标准化操作程序势在必行”，Fields 公司的 Daisy Song 说，“这包括仓库的设计，多维度的温度控制，

完整的冷藏链，包装环境，包装材料的选用和高效地递送。瑞士的食物加工以其干净、规范的环境控制显然会在中国市场受到追捧，但是保证拥有一条完美的供应链是能够在电商渠道成功销售食物的决定性因素。”

当然，中国的市场竞争十分激烈，但在中国市场表现优异的瑞士公司收益都很可观。目前，质量上乘、口碑很好的外国公司（通常定价也更贵）的产品在中国日益迅猛增长的电子商务市场反响不错。未来的利润也令人垂涎欲滴。“仅仅在双十一当天，66 亿美元交易额中就有 37% 来自外国品牌或商家”这个最终数据令外资企业大吃一惊，他们显然低估了中国消费者们对于外国商品的购买欲。○



Lucas Rondez.  
Hangzhou Boru Network Technology

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