



'Double-11' Shopping Holiday Creator Backs Women in Tech

November 11, 2015

[Share](#) [Comments \(0\)](#)

By Jane Willborn Editor: Jane Willborn



Jack Ma [China Daily]

Through the strategic marketing efforts of Alibaba, China's largest e-commerce retailer, China's November 11 holiday traditionally celebrating singles has been rebranded as an online shopping extravaganza called "Double-11" with sales far exceeding those of Black Friday or Cyber Monday, its Western counterparts. According to Edward Tse, author of the book "China's Disruptors: How Alibaba, Xiaomi, Tencent, and other Companies Are Changing the Rules of Business", the online

powerhouse dominates the market, accounting for about 80 percent of the country's e-commerce business with a value exceeding that of eBay and Amazon combined. However, contrary to the stereotype of tech industries in the West, the corporation is committed to providing equal opportunities for female employees.

When creating a special for the State broadcaster CCTV in the UK last week, Alibaba's founder and former CEO Jack Ma gave a keynote speech on women. He linked his introduction to the issue, saying, "I didn't used to pay attention to what kind of work our company was doing (on this front) until last year, a month before our IPO, an American reporter came to our office. While walking around, he asked, 'How come there are so many women at your company?' I said, 'Anything wrong?'"

Ma noted that a third of the 18 original founders of Alibaba were women, and gender ratios in the business have consistently remained around equal, with 34 percent of their senior-level management positions currently occupied by women. This is in stark contrast to the norms in Silicon Valley, with Fortune Magazine reporting that Google's leadership positions managed by women dwindle at 21 percent and Cisco's hover around 19 percent.

The company has also provided a successful platform for female entrepreneurs, as over half of the [sellers on Taobao](#), the company's syndicate market website, are female and their affiliated financial group, Ant Financial, distributes over half of their micro-loans to women.

This year, Ma has put a special emphasis on promoting women's rights, gaining particular attention this spring as Alibaba held its first [Global Conference on Women and Entrepreneurship](#). The conference drew in major international players like Melanie Walker, senior adviser to the president of the World Bank Group, and Arianna Huffington, co-founder and editor-in-chief at Huffington Post. Ma intends to continue the tradition, saying that he hopes it can transition into a "women's Davos," referring to the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Switzerland.

As he said in his keynote speech last week, "The issue (of women), I think, is very interesting. Basically all men are willing to talk about it. But not every man who talks about it can actually handle it well." While the CEO has made some oversimplified statements in his feminist proclamations, notably calling women the "special sauce" of his company in the women's conference and making claims like "women are more honest than men" in his most recent lecture, the tech mogul's commitment to advancing opportunities for women in the modern economy is not to be undervalued.

As this year's Double-11 shopping festival started in full force with revenues of over 1 billion yuan in just the first three minutes and topping out at over U.S.\$1 billion in under 10 minutes, Alibaba has

Related Story

- [Jack Ma: Women Are Alibaba's Secret to Rapid Growth](#)
- [Career Women Should Play to Their Strengths: Alibaba Co-Founder](#)
- [Online Transaction a Trend for Chinese Art Lovers](#)
- [Singles Day Shopping Craze Broadens E-business's Reach](#)
- [Jack Ma Ranks Among the Most Generous Chinese Philanthropists in 2015](#)

Newsletter

Gender: Male FemaleCountry: E-mail:

Magazines

[More](#)

November Issue, 2015 November Issue, 2015

firmly secured its position in the Chinese economy. With Ma's outspoken support of feminism leading the way, this bodes well for the future of [Chinese women in the tech industry](#).

(Women of China)

Please understand that womenofchina.cn,a non-profit, information-communication website, cannot reach every writer before using articles and images. For copyright issues, please contact us by emailing: website@womenofchina.cn. The articles published and opinions expressed on this website represent the opinions of writers and are not necessarily shared by womenofchina.cn.



Related stories

- Jack Ma: Women Are Alibaba's Secret to Rapid Growth 2015-09-29
- Career Women Should Play to Their Strengths: Alibaba Co-Founder 2015-05-22
- Online Transaction a Trend for Chinese Art Lovers 2015-11-11
- Singles Day Shopping Craze Broadens E-business's Reach 2014-11-12
- Jack Ma Ranks Among the Most Generous Chinese Philanthropists in 2015 2015-09-10

Comments 0

Name: **Nationality:**

Verification code: **BJZZ**

No comment

