

Online Retailing - China - May 2013

Report Price: £2463.80 | \$3990.00 | €3129.79

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“Online retailing has recently become the fastest growing channel within the retail market in China. With so many new entrants coming into the market all the time, it is still in a highly dynamic stage of development and will continue to see a great deal of new innovation as companies attempt to build a lasting presence in the market.”
 – Matthew Crabbe, Director of Research, Asia-Pacific

In this report we answer the key questions:

- How did the rapid growth of online retailing surprise the retailers?
- How can online retailers compete in the retail market?
- Are current payment systems and delivery sufficient enough to keep up with demand?
- How are online retailers utilising consumers' mobile access?

The rapid recent growth in online retailing in China has begun to fundamentally reshape the country's entire retail market, profoundly affecting the way all retailers are having to plan their business strategies. The situation is also changing the way product manufacturers, service providers and brands approach their engagement with their consumers, with an online presence having quickly gone from being a “nice to have” to a “must have”.

Continued rapid growth in the online market has also been marked by a great deal of innovation as online retailers vie with each other to attract consumer attention. Being competitive in pricing and providing wide product ranges and shopping convenience has become expected, and online retailers are increasingly having to improve their payment and delivery options and service quality in order to stand out from the rapidly increasing mass of competitors in the market.

The competition for consumers in the online retail market is also quickly becoming fought in the mobile internet sphere, with online retailers having to adapt quickly to new ways of accessing the internet and online consumer behaviours via smartphones and mobile apps and websites. Success in the market will therefore increasingly come down to how well companies learn to adapt to the rapidly changing needs and demands of online shoppers.

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