

RETAIL

Printemps adopts Chinese mobile pay to attract France's major shopping audience

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Printemps partners with Wirecard and becomes the first department store in France to accept payments via Alipay. Photographer Paul Blind (PRNewsFoto/Wirecard AG)

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

French department store Printemps is bringing mobile pay into France's luxury retail sector by introducing Alipay in stores, which will work to entice Chinese consumers to shop its bricks-and-mortar locations.

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A significant portion of France's shoppers is made up of Chinese consumers who often spend throughout Europe, where it is cheaper for them. Printemps is hoping to corner that market by offering a mobile pay service already popularized in China.

"Chinese tourists are an important target clientele for Printemps, which is why we are developing various unique offers and services to ensure the best response," said Annalisa Loustau, chief marketing officer at Printemps group. "Today we are especially proud to be offering them the exclusive opportunity to make purchases at Printemps through the Alipay application.

"We were able to embark on this adventure thanks to the professionalism and experience of Wirecard, which has guided and advised us throughout this process and is a strong and reliable partner for the future," she said.

Chinese mobile pay

As mobile pay in store adoption rates lag in the United States, China is ahead of the curve by two times, with 38 percent of all smartphone users in the country leveraging mobile pay according to TechInAsia.

Chinese mobile pay service Alipay, created by Wirecard, is the third most popular mobile pay application in the country. Printemps is hoping to capture the Chinese demographic that frequents its stores by partnering with Wirecard to bring Alipay to its stores.

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Alipay's mobile app

Alipay will be integrated into the store's POS and central management system and be rolled out to 18 stores by the end of the year.

With many Chinese consumers being highly susceptible to the luxury market, many luxury retailers are taking to Alipay rather than Apple Pay and other United States mobile pay services in hopes to attract the demographic.

For instance, LVMH-owned travel retailer DFS Group's outpost in San Francisco International Airport recently looked to simplify transactions with the addition of Alipay.

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Alipay's mobile app

Shoppers will now be able to make purchases using Alibaba's mobile payment option, a popular form of payment among Chinese consumers. DFS is becoming the first bricks-and-mortar retailer in California to adopt Alipay ([see more](#)).

Mobile pay competitors

There are more competitors in the mobile pay space popping up everyday and many newcomers gaining traction. For instance, Mastercard's digital payment service Masterpass is expanding its global coverage and highlighting its many features designed to give users comprehensive financial control in their smartphones.

The service, which powers a large number of banking applications from places such as Bank of America, Capital One and Sun Trust in North America, will continue to roll out in the rest of the world. Similarly, the platform began supporting contactless mobile payments last month and will expand coverage in that area as well ([see more](#)).

Alipay's main competitor is likely WeChat, who dominates in the Chinese sector with users leveraging the mobile messaging platform to accomplish an excessive range of consumer needs. Getting in more stores will help Alipay gain leverage over these competitors.

"For our customers, this roll out is synonymous with greater added value, as they can now pay with the same method they use at home," said Rita Liu, director of Alipay Europe. "Paris is one of the most popular destinations for Chinese tourists.

"Through our marketing platform, Global Lifestyle Platform, we can provide them with relevant information, such as promotions, notifications and commentary, even before they arrive in Paris," she said. "We are confident that the new Alipay offers rolled out with Printemps, in terms of payment methods and marketing, will be quickly adopted."

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