

RETAIL

## JD.com debuts dedicated ecommerce ecosystem for luxury brands

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JD.com is competing against Alibaba's Luxury Pavilion with Toplife's launch. Image credit: JD.com

By JEN KING

Chinese ecommerce marketplace JD.com is giving high-end brands a comprehensive way to reach China's affluent consumers through the launch of Toplife.

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In August, JD.com was reported to have a dedicated luxury ecommerce channel in the works, following news that its local competitor Alibaba was continuing its own upscale retail push ([see story](#)). Despite Alibaba's massive reach and recent high-end retail advances, JD.com has established itself as a trusted online partner for luxury brands due to its well-known reputation of not tolerating counterfeits.

"[JD.com's] business model is predicated on preventing counterfeits, so our relationships with brands have always been strong," said Josh Gartner, vice president, international corporate affairs at [JD.com](#), New York.

"For Toplife brands have the option to customize their flagship stores and control the complete look and feel," he said.

"Our goal is to create an online experience that mirrors a brand's offline stores, so giving them control of the look and feel were key."

### Trusted partners

JD.com, China's largest retailer, announced the launch of Toplife on Oct. 10.

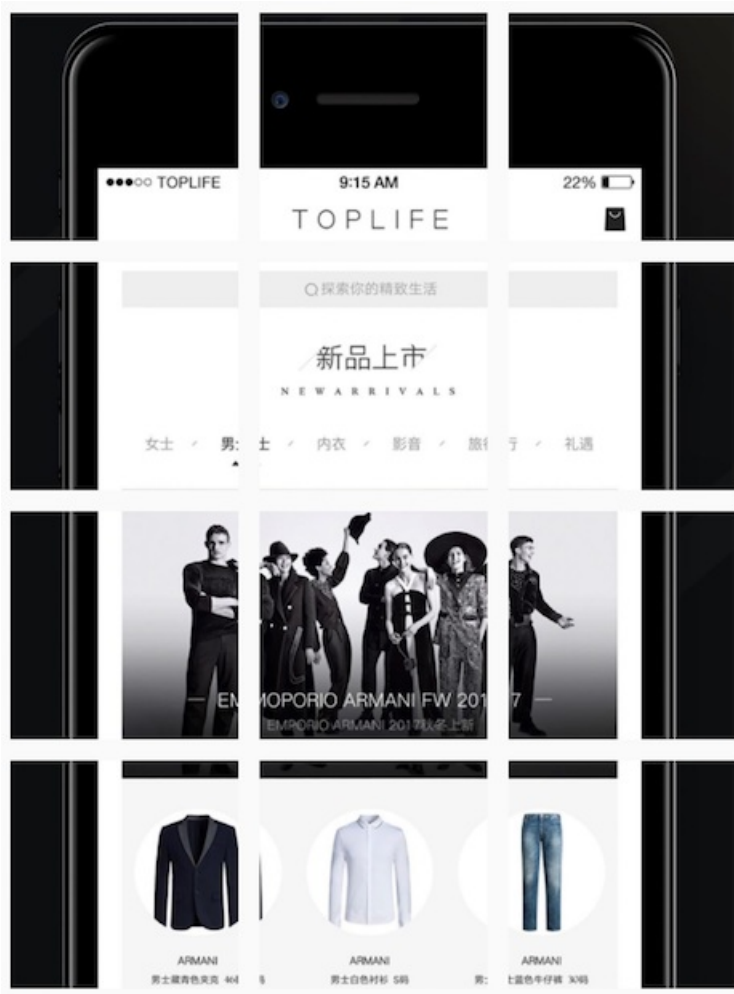
The exclusive full-priced online shopping platform will enable luxury labels to customize digital flagships to reach discerning Chinese consumers while also reinforcing brand heritage and maintaining a consistent image.

Consistency is key for JD.com's Toplife as the retailer recognizes that high-end brands, as well as consumers, prefer a dedicated sales platform that places emphasis on experience and premium service, similar to what is seen in a physical storefront.

"Our deep understanding of high-end consumers has enabled us to launch a luxury ecommerce ecosystem, and helps partners tell their brand story to local consumers," said Richard Liu, chairman and CEO of JD.com, in a

statement.

"Working with Toplife, luxury brands worldwide are now able to directly provide customers throughout China with a true luxury shopping experience previously only associated with high-end offline stores," he said. "Toplife aims to mirror the offline luxury shopping experience in a premium ecommerce experience."



*JD.com created a collage on Instagram to promote Toplife's launch. Image credit: JD.com*

By having a presence on Toplife, luxury brands will be able to sell directly to consumers through an end-to-end ecommerce ecosystem. This includes seamlessly incorporated online stores, premium customer service and delivery, marketing and brand expertise as well as specialized warehousing and inventory.

In-house fashion consultants have also been specially trained to advise Toplife consumers as they make a purchase.

Toplife's brand partners will also be able to leverage JD.com's customer service resources such as 24-hour customer support and fulfillment.

The retailer's warehouse technologies offer luxury brands dust-free sealed spaces, strict temperature and humidity controls and advanced security systems to ensure the condition of high-end goods bought via Toplife.

Many Toplife consumers will also be able to choose JD Luxury Express, the retailer's white-glove delivery service ([see story](#)). JD Luxury Express is currently available in major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Chengdu.



*JD Luxury Express merges online and physical selling tactics. Image credit: JD.com*

Categories offered will include fashion, jewelry and watches, health, fragrance and personal care, home furnishings and consumer electronics.

At launch, brands to join Toplife include La Perla, Emporio Armani, Rimowa, Bang & Olufsen's B&O Play and Trussardi. In the coming weeks more brands will be announced, with some choosing Toplife for their first Chinese online store.

#### Helping hands

Due to the established trust between brand and retailer, many luxury maisons have worked with JD.com to launch their first Chinese ecommerce platforms.

For example, Swiss jeweler Chopard recently opened an online store in China on JD.com. The launch of Chopard's digital storefront was the first time in the jeweler's 157-year history that it has had online sales in China ([see story](#)).

JD.com is also helping to introduce up-and-coming British fashion labels to Chinese consumers.

In September, The British Fashion Council (BFC) entered a partnership with JD.com to support its fashion fund and introduce emerging designers to the online retailer's 258.3 million consumers.

China is now the world's second-largest consumer and luxury market, which has caused Chinese shoppers to have an increased interest in British designers. Through its partnership with JD.com, the BFC will help talent engage with the Chinese market on a scale that may be unobtainable for independent labels ([see story](#)).

"Luxury brands understand that the entire retail game in China is online, but they've been late to enter," JD.com's Mr. Gartner said.

"They've been waiting for a luxury-branded site that can give the full experience of going into their offline stores, and that's what we've built," he said.

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