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## Lessons on driving ecommerce growth in China

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*Antonio Camero, chief digital and technology officer of Breitling, speaking last week at Luxury Society Paris Briefing. Image credit: Luxury Society*

By [Lydianne Yap](#)

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*Offering insights on driving ecommerce growth in China, the second event in Luxury Society's new Briefing series around the globe took place in Paris last week.*

According to a recent study, more than 30 percent of the luxury consumers in China do not live within areas in which luxury brands have an offline footprint, making the importance of growing ecommerce capabilities more vital than ever in the world's largest market for luxury spending.

But to address this, brands need to do more than simply making one-off investment to set up shop on leading Chinese ecommerce platforms such as Tmall.

Establishing a meaningful ecommerce presence in China requires far more thought and strategic input, as attendees of Luxury Society's event in its Briefing series learned in Paris last week at the Four Seasons George V hotel.



*Attendees at Luxury Society's Paris briefing last week. Image credit: Luxury Society*

Medium is marketing

Titled "Driving Ecommerce Growth in China," executives from top brands including LVMH, Richemont, Lanvin, Hermès, Cartier, Boucheron, Tag Heuer and Parmigiani Fleurier were present at the exclusive breakfast session which featured speakers from Breitling, Tmall, Chinese leading ecommerce service provider Baozun and

independent digital agency for luxury brands, [DLG \(Digital Luxury Group\)](#).

"Tmall is, first and foremost, a marketing platform," emphasized Jacques Roizen, executive vice president of digital transformation and new ventures at Baozun, in a panel discussion.

More than a sales channel that allows brands to reach a wider audience across larger geographies, ecommerce pure players such as Tmall provide them with an avenue to build brand equity and gain exposure. This is especially important given that consumers tend to research online and purchase offline (ROPO), as platform data indicates.

This then has to be backed up solidly with localized content for it to resonate with the target audience something that brands sometimes make the mistake of overlooking.

"Global content doesn't work," said Antonio Carriero, chief digital and technology officer of Breitling, in the same discussion.

"Brands need to adapt content to local markets," he said. "So it is also very important that they empower their local teams, and give them that decision-making power to act and adapt quickly."

Given the fast-paced nature of ecommerce in China, waiting for feedback from headquarters for every promotion or event on a platform such as Tmall would put brands out of the race.

Break operational silos

In a sea of brands on ecommerce platforms, brands can also consider leveraging Tmall's wide range of offerings to stand out including its recently unveiled Flagship 2.0, and other solutions that bring together a blend of online and offline ecommerce experiences as Nicolas Cano, international senior business development manager at Tmall Luxury within the Alibaba Group, shared.

Tmall's consumer insights help to further support brands in assessing performance and building content and initiatives that really resonate with audiences.

Helping a brand to be successful on ecommerce in China is not a one-man job, but something that involves the tripartite expertise of the platform that the brand chooses, its ecommerce service provider, or TP, as they are referred to in China, and its digital agency.

However, with so many players in the mix, each entity tends to operate in a silo, never truly working together with the other parties. This creates a disconnect, impacting the brand's overall ecommerce performance.

"Brands need to make sure they break that operational silos and support all their partners," said Pablo Mauron, partner and managing director for China at DLG, in his presentation at the event.

"They also have to start trusting them to make the right decisions, and accept that they have to lose control to be agile," he said.

Mr. Mauron also highlighted the importance of brands planning their marketing calendars around the myriad of events on ecommerce platforms such as Tmall, instead of trying to fit these events into their existing calendar.

"These platform events and milestones are highly established in the market and will offer the brand a great deal of exposure," he said. "Brands should take this seriously so as to maximize the impact of their existing assets."



*Speaking at DLG division Luxury Society's Paris Briefing Pablo Mauron, partner and managing director of China at Digital Luxury Group, told attendees to lose control to be agile in the Chinese ecommerce market. Image credit: Luxury Society*

AS CHINA'S ecommerce landscape continues to grow at breakneck speed, international brands need to keep pace

by staying on top of trends and user behavior in the world's largest market for luxury goods.

"As a brand, you cannot dictate how you want to operate, you have to play by their rules," Breitling's Mr. Carriero said. "The better you are at this game, the more successful you will be."



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