

# Strategies retailers should take note of from Singles' Day 2021

Article

Singles' Day—China's annual shopping extravaganza in November—is the world's biggest shopping event, with an estimated **RMB 965.1 billion (\$139.83 billion)** in sales this year, according to the China e-Business Research Center. It is also changing how consumers shop by showcasing new retail concepts, such as the metaverse, nonfungible tokens (NFTs), sustainability, and agile commerce.

## Leading Motivations for Shopping on Singles' Day\* According to Singles' Day Digital Shoppers in China, Oct 2021

% of respondents



Note: ages 18+ who plan to participate in 2021 Singles' Day; respondents selected their top three; \*also known as 11/11  
Source: AltxPartners, "Live It Up: Live commerce set to become the driving force of Singles' Day 2021," Oct 27, 2021

271091

eMarketer | InsiderIntelligence.com

## The 2021 Singles' Day events featured a variety of new(-ish) concepts retailers should take note of:

- **The metaverse will affect shopping.** Alibaba launched a virtual art exhibition featuring NFT artwork from brand sponsors like **Burberry** and **Alienware**, with humanlike virtual influencer Ayayi acting as a tour guide. Customers could buy limited-edition Burberry merchandise and receive a digital "collection." Alibaba also launched a revamped **Tmall** Luxury Pavilion featuring augmented reality (AR) try-ons and 3D showrooms.
- **The power of livestreaming drove conversions.** Top influencers Austin (Jiaqi) Li and Viya drove a combined **RMB 20 billion (\$2.90 billion)** in sales during their 12-hour livestream marathons. Li's session alone drew **250 million** viewers. Short-video apps **Douyin** and **Kuaishou** also reported increased brand usage and user engagement with livestreams. Some brands have moved livestream production in-house to take greater control of the process, while others shifted content to short-video apps and owned media (known as "private domain" in China, e.g., **WeChat** chat groups) to reduce their traffic acquisition costs.
- **Retailers' commitment to sustainability is essential.** Green is the new black: Alibaba made sustainability one of its core tenets this Singles' Day, following China's pledge to become carbon neutral by 2060. New initiatives from Alibaba included a dedicated page for green products, a voucher giveaway for shoppers making green purchases, and new

environmentally friendly packaging. Alibaba's logistics arm **Cainiao** also aimed to recycle 70% of the packages it handled.

- **Companies are using agile, data-driven commerce.** In recent years, Alibaba, **JD.com**, and **Pinduoduo** have launched AI solutions to help merchants churn out new products quickly, economically, and efficiently with better sales results. This year, apparel brand **Dickies** worked with Alibaba to launch a new line of baseball jackets in China just ahead of Singles' Day, while **Philips** debuted a water flosser designed specifically for the Chinese market.
- **There is a need to focus on accessibility.** To better serve older consumers, Alibaba's **Taobao** app launched a version with a simplified interface and features like voice commands to make digital shopping easier, along with games that unlocked discounts on groceries. To offer a more inclusive shopping experience for those with walking impairments, Tmall launched its "One Shoe Program" with brand partners **Sketchers**, **Reebok**, and **Ecco**, allowing consumers to buy one side of a pair of shoes for half the price.

[Read the full report.](#)