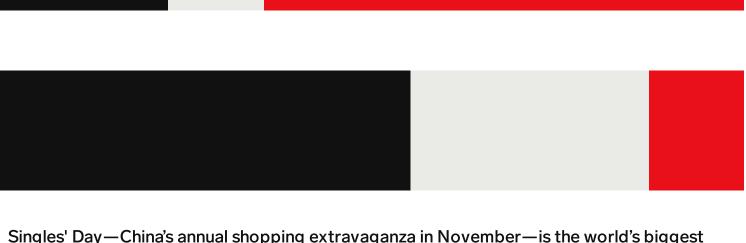
Strategies retailers should take note of from Singles' Day 2021

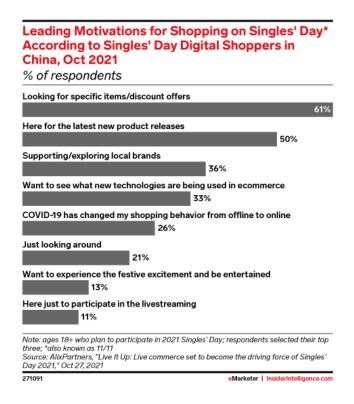
Article



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.







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 Al 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.