



alibaba: The Inside Story Behind Jack Ma and the Creation of the World's Biggest Online Marketplace

By Liu Shiying, Martha Avery

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The first in-depth look at the multibillion-dollar company Alibaba.com—known to many as "China's eBay"—and the inspirational story behind the man who created it.

A bestseller in China and now translated into English and updated with recent events, *Alibaba* by Liu Shiying and Martha Avery tells the remarkable story behind the Internet phenomenon Alibaba.com and its founder Jack Ma, a man *Barron's* named one of the World's Top 30 CEOs in 2008. Ma's rise to prominence presents a riveting story: Despite growing up in China during the Cultural Revolution—in a period of total state control of the economy—he developed the keen entrepreneurial instincts that propelled him to billionaire status and enabled him to build a company outside the usual government channels. These instincts and habits incorporated martial arts training and allowed him to recognize, early on, that the Internet could leverage his company to rapid growth and also transform the way business is done around the world.

Alibaba.com, where businesses can buy and sell everything from air beds to zippers, started with a modest initial investment of \$60,000 and has grown exponentially since its founding in 1999 to become the world's biggest business-to-business Web site. In 2007 it became the second largest IPO in history (after Google), and *Fast Company* has named it one of the world's most innovative companies. As a result, smart investors and technology insiders will be keeping a close eye on Alibaba for years to come. Whether you're seeking to understand China's meteoric rise, or just searching for the next Google, Yahoo!, or Amazon, *Alibaba* is crucial reading.



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Editorial Review

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Jack Ma had the odds stacked against him from an early age: Born shortly after the Cultural Revolution in China, a time of great social tension for all, his family was ostracized for having sided with counterrevolutionary forces. His growth was stunted, he had a lot of trouble in school, was stubborn and undisciplined; and being quite rebellious, he got into a lot of fights, but he usually lost because of his small size. He failed the college entrance examination twice and was nearly condemned to a lifelong profession of low-paying service work. Despite all this, Ma went on to create one of the largest online business-to-business marketplaces in the world in a country that has some of the most restrictive laws regarding Internet freedom. From an initial investment of \$60,000 in 1999, Alibaba.com has surpassed eBay in China as the largest Web site on which to buy and sell goods, and is now worth \$26 billion. How he did it is an inspirational story of perseverance in the martial-arts tradition of creating a will through positive reinforcement. --David Siegfried

Review

“[Alibaba is] entertaining. Avery occasionally gives the story a mystical air with allusions to proverbs and martial art...Avery has turned the reverential original into a highly readable tale.” (Financial Times)

“The story of how he built his fortune is not well known. Inevitably, Liu Shiying and Martha Avery, the authors of “Alibaba,” tell us as much about how business works in China as about Mr. Ma’s entrepreneurial achievement.” (Wall Street Journal)

“Ma’s rise is worth digesting. How he progressed quickly from ignorance of the Internet to mastery of the new technology — to overcoming official Chinese resistance — will help American readers realize how surreal establishing capitalism in a quasi-Communist nation can feel.” (USA Today)

“This business history discusses one of the most successful global Internet companies, and, to make it even more interesting, it is also a biography of Alibaba’s eccentric founder, the visionary, and entrepreneurial risk take, Jack Ma... [an] accessible inside look at Chinese e-commerce.” (Library Journal)

“[A]n inspirational story of perseverance.” (Booklist)

About the Author

Liu Shiying is a journalist, CEO of Guangtian Xiangshi Culture Company, and chairman of the board of GT-SUNSTONE, a company that focuses on media consulting. He also serves as deputy secretary general of the Asian Capital Forum and is a consultant for the CCTV program *Winning in China*. Author of several business publications, he is working closely with CITIC Press and CCTV on a series of books and programs about major business personalities in China. He lives in Beijing.

Martha Avery is president of Avery Press, Inc., which works with CITIC Press in bringing Chinese intellectual property to a Western market as well as bringing Western authors and their works to China. She holds a BA in Chinese and Japanese languages, an MBA from the Wharton School, and has worked for years

in publishing and related media business in Japan, Hong Kong, China, and Mongolia. Ms. Avery is also co-editor-in-chief of a forthcoming volume on Chinese banking and finance published by John Wiley & Sons.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Karon Hall:

alibaba: The Inside Story Behind Jack Ma and the Creation of the World's Biggest Online Marketplace can be one of your basic books that are good idea. Many of us recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary which could increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nonetheless delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into pleasure arrangement in writing alibaba: The Inside Story Behind Jack Ma and the Creation of the World's Biggest Online Marketplace yet doesn't forget the main point, giving the reader the hottest and based confirm resource data that maybe you can be among it. This great information can certainly drawn you into brand-new stage of crucial contemplating.

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Is it anyone who having spare time in that case spend it whole day by simply watching television programs or just resting on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This alibaba: The Inside Story Behind Jack Ma and the Creation of the World's Biggest Online Marketplace can be the reply, oh how comes? A fresh book you know. You are so out of date, spending your spare time by reading in this completely new era is common not a geek activity. So what these guides have than the others?

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Rosemary Lilly:

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