

中小企網店因時地制宜

Success of SME e-shops Counts on Timing and Location

近年網購大行其道，國際品牌相繼分一杯羹。本地中小企能否在競爭激烈的網購市場佔一席位？發展時又有何策略？

對於目前網購發展蓬勃，**本會選任會董、國際專業發展聯盟主席李賢勝**認為，相較傳統實體商店，網店具備不少優勢：網店透過網上展示商品，提供訂購，以至安排運送，消費者無時

無刻都可以瀏覽商品與光顧，年青消費者更可“一click 到位”比對貨品與價格。網店24小時“營業”的特點，適合不同作息時間的消費者。最重要的是，網店的入場門檻比實體店低得多，適合創業者小試牛刀。他又表示，香港物流配套成熟，香港郵政與順豐速運都是本地物流表表者，而不少國際快遞公司亦落戶本港，網店可應用他們的服務，而不需自設車隊，有利成本控制。

不同市場 挑戰迥異

縱然大有可為，世上亦沒有穩賺的生意，李賢勝就分享1999年蘋果速銷18個月虧損逾億港元的失敗經驗予後來者借鏡。當年蘋果速銷首推網購超市，概念領先，但香港超市林立，購物方便，市民使用網購的誘因不大；同時，港人喜好新鮮食材，網購運貨亦未必是最佳選擇。另外，當時互聯網未如現時普及，因此蘋果速銷後來倒退至電話訂購，需要額外人手；短短18個月就多次改變經營模式，又傳因供應商受壓而停止供貨，兩者皆顯示經營者有欠審慎考慮。



實際上，每個市場領域所面對的挑戰皆截然不同。內地網購市場固然興旺，但監管要求、稅收及競爭性極大的經營環境，俱可能對香港網購店帶來巨大挑戰。至於海外市場，商家需要克服的兩大挑戰，其一是外國消費者對內地網購平台始終有所保留，背後原因不外乎語言鴻溝、產品安全成疑、質量未具保證、假貨充斥等問題，因此使用內地平台經營網店的本地商戶亦受影響；而另一考慮就是運送貨物的費用與時間，都會因為地域距離而增加。

從消費者角度審視問題

經營者必須了解消費者的顧慮，才能尋求方法解決問題，讓消費者放心購物。所以第一步就是由消費者角度審視自己的網店，過程中不妨問自己幾個問題：作為消費者，對商品的品質有否充足信心？商品的訂價是以消費者慣常使用的貨幣釐定嗎？交貨方式和交貨日期，以至售後服務，都有於網頁明確說明嗎？對於交易中獲取的消費者個人資料，有否清晰說明用途？網店的支付系統是否獨立而可靠？若商品售後出現問題，網店有否售後服務提供協助？

建立品牌 突圍而出

如自問仍有不足，李賢勝建議有志讓業務更上層樓的網店經營者可尋求一個獨立、可信的機構為網購店認證及監管，確保消費者得到保障，提高可信性。消費者如有不滿亦可向獨立機構投訴，由其跟進調解。另外，針對每個想打入的目標市場，網店應該選擇當地消費者所熟知及常用的獨立支付系統，以便利交易操作。

李賢勝總結，建立品牌對網購公司十分重要，不管網店本身是經營自家品牌，又或國內外品牌的代理商，商戶本身都必須評估自己產品於市場上的定位，確定競爭上的優勢。想當然爾，商戶如擁有獨有的品牌以至產品，自然無往而不利。👉

Online shopping has become immensely popular recently, which has attracted international brands to get a share of the market. Can local SMEs acquire their shares in this highly competitive online market? What strategies can they employ in developing the market?

Commenting the upsurge of e-shops, **Leslie Lee, the Chamber's Committee Member and Chairman of International Union of Professional Development Institutions**, thought that they have a lot of advantages compared with their "offline" counterparts: e-shops display their product, accept orders and arrange delivery through internet allowing customers to browse their website and place orders anytime. The comparison of price and quality of different products can be done with just one mouse click. In Lee's view, the most important factor is that the operating costs of an e-shop are much less than those of a physical store. Hence, it is suitable for start-ups to try it out on a small scale. In addition, the integrated logistic support of Hong Kong is a huge benefit to e-shops, as they can utilize the services of local and international logistic companies instead of setting up their own logistic team, which allows better cost control.

Challenges vary with markets

However, there is no such thing as guaranteed profits in business. Lee shared an example on the failure of adMart in 1999, in which it suffered a loss of millions of Hong Kong dollar in 18 months. AdMart was the first to introduce the concept of online supermarket, which is a remarkable idea. But shopping is convenient in Hong Kong as supermarkets are all over the city; there is very little incentive for people to do shopping through online supermarket. In addition, Hong Kong people love fresh food, so online ordering and delivery may not be the best choice for food. At that time internet was not as popular as it is now. AdMart later had to step back to accepting orders by phone calls, which requires extra manpower. The frequent changes of business model in just 18 months and the rumour that suppliers were under pressure not to provide goods to adMart show the operator's lack of a sensible business plan.

In fact, different markets present different challenges. Although the Mainland online market is prosperous, its supervision, tax and competitiveness can be a great challenge to investors from Hong Kong. Overseas markets, on the other hand, present two challenges. First, overseas

consumers lack confidence in Chinese online shopping platform due to language barrier, questions on product safety and quality, and problems of counterfeit goods. This affects local firms which employ Mainland platforms to run their online businesses. Another concern is the increase in time and cost of delivery due to the geographical distance between buyers and sellers.

Looking at the challenges from the perspective of consumers

It is essential for operators to understand the concerns of consumers in order to create an environment in which customers can enjoy shopping. Operators can review their online shops and ask themselves these questions: As a consumer, do you have enough confidence on the product quality? Are the prices calculated in the local currency of the customers? Are the delivery duration and method as well as the after-sales service clearly stated in the website? Are the terms of use of the personal data collected from customers clearly stated? Is the payment system of the online shop reliable? In case of the product having problems after sales, will the shop provide any assistance?

Branding is the key to breakthrough

If there is still room for improvement, Lee suggested that operators who aspire to get ahead should seek an independent and reliable organization to certify and supervise their shop, and provide better assurance to the customers. Should there be any dissatisfaction from the customers, they are able to complain to such organizations for follow-up action. Moreover, to cater for the uniqueness of every new market, online shops should choose a payment system familiar to the target customers to facilitate the purchase process.

Lee concluded that branding is important for online shops. No matter the shops are having their own brands or acting as agents for domestic or foreign brands, it is essential for the operators to assess their positioning in the market and determine their competitive advantages. Naturally, the operators almost always gain an advantage if they have their unique brands or products.👉