
JAMES HARDY

Former Head of Europe for Alibaba

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Topics

- Digital
- Entrepreneurship
- Strategy
- Teamwork

James Hardy is an authority on retail globalisation, ecommerce and online growth strategies. He specialises in working with brands to future-proof their online expansion across diverse trading platforms (from Amazon and Alibaba to boutique marketplaces and own-brand sites).

With a background in legal mergers & acquisitions, James previously served as Head of Europe for Alibaba. He then co-founded the UK's largest China-ecommerce exporter – an award winning, high growth platform that helped brands throughout Europe build market share in mainland China.

James Hardy has worked on international ecommerce strategies for multiple FTSE 250 companies, identifying how brands can maximise their value to external, private, and public markets. He explores what the largest global conglomerates can learn from startup methodology, and what smaller companies can learn from brands such as Alibaba about scaling their business.

As an international thought-leader, James's expertise has appeared in The Financial Times, The Huffington Post, The Journal du Net, The BBC and China Daily News.

James is an energetic and engaging speaker on how Alibaba has become so dominant. In the West, companies ask themselves how they can own a certain category or sector and think from a "profit first" view. In China, the biggest companies ask what big business problems need solving and how they can solve them. Taking an ecosystem approach, they ask how they can facilitate all the different pieces of any business environment, and how they can draw in many third parties to share in this ecosystem and ultimately to share in the rewards.

James Hardy uses his Alibaba experience to educate audiences on an alternative future for business. He illustrates how Alibaba's unique approach has allowed it to completely disrupt areas as diverse as ecommerce, traditional payments, cloud computing and small business loans and challenge established businesses in areas such as offline retail and logistics.

He contrasts this approach with that of Amazon and shows the lessons to be learned from their similarities, but more importantly, their differences. He explains the environments which lead businesses to build innovative cultures and how these environments can be created in any business. And he discusses the benefits of building an ecosystem-driven network of businesses around your core capabilities.

James Hardy uses the story of his own successful unfunded business – now the largest cross-border China-focused ecommerce business in the UK – as an example of these principles in action.

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