

Creating value through e-commerce 以電子業務創造價值



THEODORE MA, DIRECTOR OF MABELLE
MABELLE董事馬衡

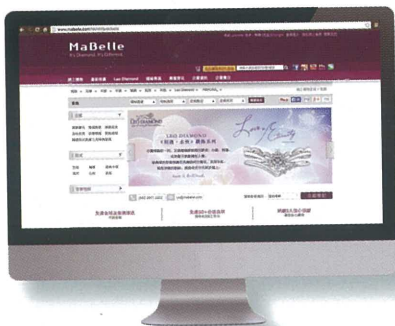
DEPENDING on how you decide to utilise the online platform, e-commerce could contribute to your business in different ways. For online retailers it is a fantastic sales channel that does not require a physical store; for others it is one of the many ways to interact with consumers. Local jewellery e-commerce players **MaBelle** and **Chow Tai Fook** shared with *Hong Kong Jewellery* their business experience.

MaBelle

"There are always new markets and new technology but customers only remember brands that understand their lifestyles," said Theodore Ma, director of MaBelle Jewellery Co. Ltd. Ma joined MaBelle in 2004 as the company's first employee in the online retail division. In 2007 he established Dorical.com, a separate business unit from MaBelle that operates MaBelle.com and MBLife.com (a separate brand that focuses on personalised jewellery) as well as a few

dozen web stores. Currently their major markets are Hong Kong and the United States.

To Ma it has always been the mission of his team to stay close to their customers and "find new ways to create value in their lives", and e-business is just one of the many channels through which they do so. For example, since 2012 MaBelle has launched the free ear piercing service to enhance its customers' shopping experience. Furthermore, the brand has offered



MABELLE'S ELECTRONIC SHOP
MABELLE網上商店

numerous online exclusive promotions such as its BB/Kids Collections that come with complimentary gifts or services targeted at babies. Ma advised that for anyone who intends to enter the online retail market they must learn the needs and behaviour patterns of online shoppers. When asked about his outlook of the jewellery e-retail business, he replied that "customers are looking for a wider variety of goods and are going online to find them."

Despite that currently MaBelle's online sales only constitute a single-digit

percentage of its total sales, Ma emphasised the importance of O2O (online to offline) strategies: "The way we see e-commerce is not based on where the customers choose to pay. Our website provides our customers with the convenience to browse, enquire and make reservations of our products and services." Such a perspective is shared by many companies, including Macy's, that embrace omnichannel retailing. For instance, apart from an e-shop, MaBelle has also created a fanShare page and app that

allow consumers to create a page that showcases MaBelle products of their choice to share via their social network. At the same time exclusive discounts are offered to registered members. What's more, the brand has also accumulated over 400,000 fans on Sina Weibo. They are also beginning to sell their products on platforms

other than their own e-shop such as Tmall and Amazon. All these serve to promote the brand's awareness and encourage sales.

Chow Tai Fook

To respond to the growing trend of e-commerce in the mainland, Chow Tai Fook had established its first electronic store in Tmall in 2010 and its own e-shop in 2011 to attract new customers with a new sales channel. According to Chow Tai Fook, their e-business in mainland

market is "growing exponentially" and most of their online purchasers are the young generations. In particular, the brand launched a 'GunZ Dash' campaign with Tencent Games in 2014 to appeal to young online gamers. It had attracted large crowds to their physical stores where the players competed and the limited edition jewellery created for the collaboration was well-received. Chow Tai Fook even introduced its own characters from the 'Bao Bao Family' collection into the game. To broaden its appeal among youngsters, Chow Tai Fook has also partnered with South Korean idols like G-Dragon and Lee Min Ho to produce special jewellery collections and to strengthen its image as a fashionable jeweller.

Currently Chow Tai Fook's online sales only contributed to about one percent of its total sales but the group is hoping to increase the ratio to 5 percent within the

next few years. The company's data shows that e-commerce sales performance in the first half of 2014/2015 fiscal year had increased by 48 percent compared to last year. Apart from their own e-shop, they are also selling on the two largest e-retail platforms in mainland China, Tmall and JD.com. As of March 2015, Chow Tai Fook has accumulated over 1.7 million followers in Sina Weibo, Tencent Weibo and WeChat, which helped increase its brand awareness and product exposure by direct feeding of promotional messages and attracting followers to visit their physical and electronic stores.

Chow Tai Fook expects e-commerce to continue growth especially in China as the purchasing power of young people as well as women is rising. In terms of mobile applications, apart from the app of its own brand, Chow Tai Fook has also created 'CTF Watch' and 'The Perfect One' (wedding planning) apps to facilitate consumers while further promoting its own brand.

Challenges

Despite the possible creation of value, maintaining a jewellery e-business is by no means easy. For MaBelle, the biggest challenge of its e-business is to keep up with adequate web technology and retailing talents to meet the needs of business expansion as there are many new sales channels and platforms. Consider the fact that

MaBelle.com is now accepting 10 types of payment that support multiple currencies. Without constantly updated technology, easy and secure payment methods will not be possible. As for Chow Tai Fook, they named efficient handling of sales order, safe and on-time delivery and counterfeit products on other online platforms their biggest difficulties.

While the above efforts in e-commerce development have yet to yield substantial increase in revenue, it demonstrates these companies' attempt to cope with the changing retail environment and habits of consumers. ■

視乎如何運用網上平台，電子商務可以為業務帶來不同貢獻。對於網上零售商，電子商務是一個無需實體商店也可以賺錢的銷售渠道；對其他商店則是一種與消費者互動的渠道。**MaBelle**和**周大福**與《香港珠寶》分享了他們在電子商務方面的經驗。

MaBelle

MaBelle Jewellery Co Ltd董事馬衡說：「新的市場和科技不斷出現，但顧客只會記住那些了解他們生活方式的品牌。」馬衡於2004年加入公司，成為首位網上零售部門的員工。於2007年他創立了一個獨立部門Dorical.com，負責營運MaBelle.com及MBLife.com（一個專門銷售個人化首飾的品牌）等網上商店。目前他們的主要市場是香港和美國。

對馬衡來說，與客人互動的意思就是要貼近顧客，並尋找「新的方式為客人創



'GUNZ DASH' CAMPAIGN ORGANISED BY CHOW TAI FOOK AND TENCENT GAMES
周大福與騰訊合辦「天天酷跑」比賽掀起熱潮。