

New Retail

UNIT

3



Teaching objectives

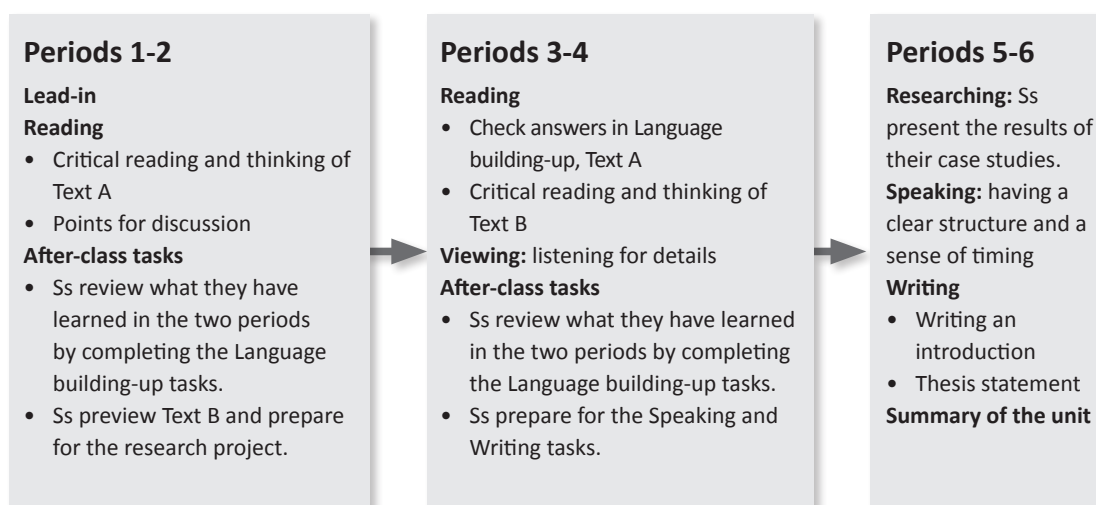
Upon completion of this unit, Ss are expected to accomplish the following objectives:

Professional knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the nature and characteristics of the New Retail model • Acquire some knowledge about the future of the retail industry • Get acquainted with some specialized vocabulary of New Retail and the retail industry
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical reading and thinking <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Understand the structure of business writing (e.g., cause-effect analysis, contrastive analysis) 2) Analyze difficult sentences 3) Think about issues critically (e.g., Why does the combination of online and offline retail better engage shoppers?) • Language building-up <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Learn the specialized vocabulary of retail 2) Practice vocabulary and collocations in academic contexts 3) Study some formal language use • Researching Conduct a case study of a retailer that adopts the New Retail model
Viewing	Listen for details
Speaking	Have a clear structure and a sense of timing for making a presentation
Writing	Learn to write the introduction part (including a thesis statement) of an academic essay

Suggested teaching plans

Overview

This unit is designed for six periods of classroom activities. In each of the periods, certain tasks are to be completed. Generally speaking, there may be several different ways to explore this unit. Here is a suggested teaching plan.



Teaching guides for each part

Reading

Text A

Teaching steps

Lead-in

- 1 Divide the class into groups of 4-5 to discuss the questions in the task.
- 2 Ask each group to summarize their viewpoints of Question 3 and invite some groups to share their ideas with the whole class.

T may give comments on Ss' ideas and lead into Text A by saying, "A new business model, New Retail, combines the best of offline and online retail. Now let's study Text A to learn more about New Retail."

Critical reading and thinking

1 Overview

- 1) Ask Ss to scan Paras. 5-7 and find out the definition of New Retail.
- 2) Draw Ss' attention to the subheadings in the rest of the text and inform them of the main characteristics of New Retail.
- 3) Ask Ss to read the text more carefully and complete Task 1.

2 Points for discussion

- 1) Put Ss into groups of 4-5 to discuss questions in Task 2.
- 2) Invite some groups to share their views with the class.
- 3) Encourage other groups to feed back once the presenting groups have finished their reports.

Language building-up

1 Specialized vocabulary

- 1) Ask Ss to work through Task 1 to review the specialized vocabulary used in the text.
- 2) Check Ss' answers.
- 3) Draw Ss' attention to Key terms for further study at the end of the unit.

2 Academic vocabulary

- 1) Ask Ss to practice the words in the box in the academic context by completing Task 2.
- 2) Check Ss' answers.

3 Collocations

- 1) Guide Ss through Task 3 to help them grasp the frequent and useful collocations which occur in academic contexts.
- 2) Check Ss' answers.

4 Formal English

Ask Ss to complete Task 4 and check their answers.

Supplementary information

1 New Retail

The retailing model makes use of big data and AI technologies to update the processes of manufacturing, logistics and sales so as to integrate online service, offline experience and modern logistics. The online segment usually features cloud platforms, and the offline segment includes physical stores and manufacturers; modern logistics has the advantage of reducing inventory. The New Retail model drives the development of offline buying in the digital age, and meanwhile improves the buying experience of online retail.

2 augmented reality technology

The technology integrates digital information of viewing, listening, touching, and movement to create a virtual environment for users. As a new human-computer interaction technology,

it utilizes sensing devices to immerse users in the virtual environment so as to enable users' interaction with the virtual environment. Users can enjoy the almost real environment and the experiences that they otherwise cannot have due to the limits of time and space.

Language support

1 ... it's more a question of how the established world of physical stores can best be combined with the world of e-commerce and technology to create seamless, super convenient and fun ways to shop. (Para. 1)

1) more a question of ... 更多的是……问题，用于提起注意；more表示程度，常用的程度副词还有just, merely, only等。

e.g. It is merely a question of deciding which market segment to target.

2) How ... 具体说明问题的细节；

3) to create seamless, super convenient and fun ways to shop为不定式短语表达目的。

2 Now the biggest single shopping event in the world by a substantial margin, this year's event not only generated record-breaking revenues of \$25.4 billion, but crucially enabled the brands taking part to engage with their customers in many different innovative and immersive ways that help to build their brands, too. (Para. 2)

Now the biggest single shopping event in the world by a substantial margin为修饰语，指代this year's event;

Paraphrase: The event is the biggest single shopping event in the world by a remarkably large margin; this year, it generated record-breaking revenues of \$25.4 billion; what is more important, the participating brands were enabled to use many different new and involving ways to engage with their customers, which were helpful to their brand building.

3 A closer look at the success of 11.11 and the principles of New Retail that underpin it shows that there are real opportunities for all retailers to attract new customers, as well as increasing the spend of existing ones through blending online and offline channels more effectively. (Para. 4)

此句的主干为：A closer look ... shows that there are real opportunities for ...

Paraphrase: If we look further into the success of 11.11 and the basic principles of New Retail, we can find that all retailers can have the real opportunities to attract new customers, and that by more effectively combining online and offline channels the consumption of existing customers can also increase.

4 Hema has digitalised the entire store providing consumers with a 3-in-1 retail experience that encompasses all modes and desires of modern urban shoppers, including technology-driven fulfilment of online delivery, seamless in-store purchases and in-store consumption. (Para. 11)

此句的主干为Hema has digitalised the entire store; providing consumers with ... 和including ...为现在分词和介词短语修饰语，补充说明相关信息。

Paraphrase: Hema has put all the store information into a digital form so as to enable a 3-in-1 shopping experience, that is, consumers can enjoy online delivery achieved by modern technology, in-store shopping processes and in-store consumption that are smooth with no pauses; such a 3-in-1 retail experience includes all the ways of modern shopping and meets all the needs of consumers in cities.

- 5 All of this goes to show that for UK retailers with the foresight to get on board, the seamless offline / online world of New Retail has a great deal to offer in terms of giving the 21st-century, mobile-loving shoppers the immersive, cross-channel experience they desire and will soon come to expect. (Para. 14)

1) in terms of ... / in ... terms 在……方面

e.g. The business plan is difficult to carry to completion in practical terms.

2) ... they desire and will soon come to expect为定语从句，修饰前面的中心词experience。

Text B

▲ Teaching steps

Critical reading and thinking

- 1 T may lead in by saying, "In the face of the great changes in the retail industry, how can traditional retailers survive? Text B provides some insightful suggestions for the future of retail buying."
- 2 Ask Ss to scan the text and pay attention to the following information:
 - 1) The contrast between physical retailing and cyber-buying;
 - 2) The author's suggestions for the development of physical retailers.
- 3 Guide Ss through the text and find out key points required by the task.
- 4 Ask Ss to complete the task and check their answers.

Language building-up

1 Academic vocabulary

- 1) Ask Ss to practice the words in the box in the academic context by completing Task 1.
- 2) Check Ss' answers.

2 Collocations

- 1) Familiarize Ss with the common collocations from the text by completing Task 2.
- 2) Check Ss' answers.

Researching

- 1 Guide Ss through the directions of the task.
- 2 Put Ss into groups of 4-5 to conduct their case study of the New Retail model in practice. Remind Ss that their research could be guided by the questions listed in the task.
- 3 Each group makes a presentation of their case study to the class. (The preparation of the presentation could be combined with the task of Speaking.)
- 4 Comment on Ss' performance.

▲ Supplementary information

1 the millennials

The millennials, also referred to as Generation Y, refer to the generation born between the 1980s and the early 1990s. The millennials have grown up with the fast development of Internet and computer science. Some research shows that the generation tend to use high-tech products more skillfully and are more likely to be multi-taskers; their lifestyle involves high levels of consumption, but is not necessarily materialistic; and they value family and friendship more than work.

2 baby boomer

The baby boomer generation is a large segment of the world's population, especially in developed countries. In the US, baby boomers account for nearly 20% of the population. Due to its large number, the baby boomer generation are regarded as influential in economic development, and are often as important target of marketing campaigns and business plans.

▲ Language support

- 1 Although cyber-buying still takes a back seat to purchases at physical stores — sometimes referred to as “brick-and-mortar stores” — the click-and-buy technique has tripled in use in just the last 10 years. (Para. 4)

Sometimes referred to as “brick-and-mortar stores”为插入语，补充说明physical stores，相当于“which sometimes are referred to as ‘brick-and-mortar stores’”。

Paraphrase: Online shopping is not as important as shopping at physical stores, which sometimes are referred to as “brick-and-mortar stores,” but the application of online shopping technique has become three times as much in just the last 10 years.

- 2 The only option — other than throwing in the towel — is to shut down weaker stores and undertake a remake with their stronger outlets. (Para. 5)

1) throw in the towel意为“认输、承认失败”，全文采用了比喻手法，将传统零售和网络零售的关系比拟成一场比赛；

2) other than throwing in the towel为插入语，补充说明the only option。

Paraphrase: What the traditional brick-and-mortar retailers can only do is to close down weaker stores and make their stronger stores different; otherwise, they have to admit their defeat.

- 3 Yet for now, there's a real heavyweight championship on the line between traditional retailers in one corner and upstart cyber retailers in the other. (Para. 15)

此句采用了比喻的修辞手法，将传统零售和网络零售的关系比拟成一场比赛，因此使用了与比赛相关的具体义项，如championship, on the line, in one corner, in the other等。

Viewing

▲ Teaching steps

- 1 T may lead in by saying, "Text A and Text B show us the new model and trend in the retail industry. What about the current situation of retailing in China? The speaker in the video clip provides some important details for you to have a closer look."
- 2 Guide Ss to learn to listen for details to improve listening comprehension.
- 3 Play video Clip 1 twice and ask Ss to listen for details and find out answers to questions in Task 1.
- 4 Play video Clip 2 twice and ask Ss to complete Task 2.
- 5 Check Ss' answers to Task 1 & 2.

Speaking

▲ Teaching steps

- 1 Guide Ss through the instructions on having a clear structure and a sense of timing.
- 2 Draw Ss' attention to the task. Ask Ss to remain in the groups formed for doing the Researching task. Guide Ss to structure their presentations and have a proper time control following the suggested steps.
- 3 Each group makes a presentation of their case study to the class. (This could be combined with the task of Researching.)
- 4 Comment on Ss' performance and give suggestions on how to improve.

Writing

▲ Teaching steps

- 1 Guide Ss to understand the structure and content of the introduction part of an academic essay.
- 2 Draw Ss' attention to the importance of a thesis statement.

- 3 Guide Ss to make a textual analysis of the sample introductory paragraph.
- 4 Ask Ss to do Task 1 and discuss their answers in pairs. T makes textual analysis of two introductory paragraphs as suggested answers.
- 5 Ask Ss to do Task 2 after class. Remind them to highlight in bold the thesis statement of their introductory paragraph. Before they hand in their writing, they should ask at least one classmate to read and give comments on their paragraph.
- 6 Give feedback on Ss' introductory paragraph. Select some model paragraphs to share with the class.

Answer keys and scripts

Reading

Text A

Lead-in

Task

Answers may vary. Here are some useful points for reference.

- 1 I think the greatest strength of the traditional physical retail is that one can directly see, touch, examine, or experience the products so as to effectively decide whether to buy or not. What's more, one can get the products as soon as they make the payment. However, it is troublesome that the products one wants to buy could be out of stock, so that customers would get disappointed in the store. That is the major weakness of the traditional physical retail.
- 2 As for the online retail, customers can use their cell phones or personal computers to easily go over product categories, compare different choices and select the product they are most satisfied with. Such convenience and efficiency is the major advantage of online retail. Meanwhile, it could be problematic that the goods purchased online could fall short of customers' expectations, as they can only view the pictures and read the descriptions of the products instead of seeing and touching them in person before making the purchase.
- 3 I think stores can combine online and offline retail to make the best use of their strengths and overcome their weaknesses. For example, Suning, a chain electronics and appliance retailer in China, provides an online platform for customers to learn about goods and make their purchases; meanwhile, its physical stores, with professional salespeople, enable customers to learn about and experience with products. Such business model constitutes a competitive advantage of Suning in the electronics and appliance market.

Critical reading and thinking

Task 1 / Overview

- 1) seamless engagement between the online and offline worlds.
- 2) online
- 3) offline
- 4) Smart stores
- 5) Hema supermarkets of Alibaba
- 6) mobile phones
- 7) “See Now, Buy Now” fashion show
- 8) Fun
- 9) Alibaba’s “Catch the Cat” game

Task 2 / Points for discussion

Answers may vary. Here are some useful points for reference.

- 1 I think information technology plays two important roles in New Retail: One is to link retailers’ internal and external data processing systems more efficiently, and the other is to enable retailers to better satisfy the needs of their customers.
- 2 One major reason could be that the combination much better meets customers’ needs for shopping. The online retail platform enables the convenience and efficiency of going over product categories, making purchasing decisions, and paying for the goods, while the physical stores provide customers opportunities to experience products and enjoy professional services.

Language building-up

Task 1 / Specialized vocabulary

1

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 实体店 | 2 利润 |
| 3 线上和线下渠道 | 4 收入; 收益 |
| 5 变革型商业模式 | 6 New Retail |
| 7 shopping experience | 8 in-store experience |
| 9 in stock | 10 payment transaction |

2

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1) transformative business model | 2) shopping experience |
| 3) payment transactions | 4) in-store experiences |
| 5) online and offline channels | 6) physical stores |

Task 2 / Academic vocabulary

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1 Initiative | 2 principles |
| 3 declines | 4 data |

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| 5 innovative | 6 transformed |
| 7 interactive | 8 demonstrations |
| 9 ultimately | 10 generate |

Task 3 / Collocations

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 1 in the face of | 2 in terms of |
| 3 engage with | 4 were combined with |
| 5 leverage data | 6 build brands |
| 7 specific to | |

Task 4 / Formal English

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 only | 2 very large |
| 3 rapidly growing | 4 support it as a basis |
| 5 tailored; only relevant to | 6 includes |

Text B

Critical reading and thinking

Task / Overview

- 1) increasing
- 2) having a downturn in business
- 3) struggling to survive
- 4) the emergence and prevalence of online buying
- 5) integrate online buying alternatives into their business
- 6) take advantage of physical convenience

Language building-up

Task 1 / Academic vocabulary

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1 emergence | 2 aggregate |
| 3 exploiting | 4 techniques |
| 5 dynamics | 6 survive |
| 7 substitute | 8 reaction |
| 9 undertake | 10 inspected |

Task 2 / Collocations

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 prior to | 2 stand by |
| 3 substitutes for | 4 is cluttered with |
| 5 favor; over | 6 shut it down |
| 7 are interspersed with | 8 caught the manager's eye |

Viewing

Task 1

- 1 E-commerce in China has been growing at twice the speed of the United States.
- 2 500 million.
- 3 Less than five years.
- 4 Alibaba and Tencent.

Task 2

- 1 five to eight; tripled
- 2 no particular reason
- 3 grocery; insurance products
- 4 products; services
- 5 not new enough
- 6 what they want when they still want it
- 7 social media; product ideas
- 8 small orders; partially customized
- 9 three to four days
- 10 what is in and hot

Scripts

Video Clip 1

A huge shopping revolution is happening in China right now. Shopping behaviors, and also technology platforms, have evolved differently than elsewhere in the world. For instance, e-commerce in China is soaring. It's been growing at twice the speed of the United States and a lot of the growth is coming from mobile. Every month, 500 million consumers are buying on mobile phones, and to put that into context, that is a total population of the United States, UK and Germany combined. But it is not just about the scale of the e-commerce, it is the speed of adoption and the aggregation of the ecosystems. It took China less than five years to become a country of mobile commerce, and that is largely because of the two technology platforms, Alibaba and Tencent. They own 90% of the e-commerce — pretty much the whole market — 85% of social media, 85% of Internet payment. And they also own large volumes of digital content, video, online movie, literature, travel information, and gaming. When this huge base of mobile shoppers meets with aggregated ecosystems, chemical reactions happen. Today, China is like a huge laboratory generating all sorts of experiments. You should come to China, because here you will get a glimpse into the future.

Video Clip 2

One of the trends I have seen concerns the spontaneity of shopping. Five years ago, in a

fashion study, we found that on average, a Chinese consumer would be buying five to eight pairs of shoes. This number tripled to reach about 25 pairs of shoes a year. Who would need so many pairs of shoes? So I asked them, “What are the reasons you buy?” They told me a list of inspirations: blogs, celebrity news, fashion information. But really, for many of them, there was no particular reason to buy. They were just browsing on their mobile site and then buying whatever they saw. We have observed the same level of spontaneity in everything, from grocery shopping to buying insurance products. But it is not very difficult to understand if you think about it. A lot of the Chinese consumers are still very new in their middle-class or upper-middle-class lifestyles, with a strong desire to buy everything new, new products, new services. And with this integrated ecosystem, it is so easy for them to buy, one click after another. However, this new shopping behavior is creating a lot of challenges for those once-dominant businesses. The owner of a fashion company told me that he’s so frustrated because his customers keep complaining that his products are not new enough. Well, for a fashion company, really bad comment. And he already increased the number of products in each collection. It doesn’t seem to work. So I told him there’s something more important than that. You’ve got to give your consumers exactly what they want when they still want it. And he can learn something from the online apparel players in China. These companies, they collect real consumer feedback from mobile sites, from social media, and then their designers will translate this information into product ideas, and then send them to microstudios for production. These microstudios are really key in this overall ecosystem, because they take small orders, 30 garments at a time, and they can also make partially customized pieces. All these production designs are done locally. The whole process, from transporting to product on shelf or online sometimes takes only three to four days. That is super fast, and that is highly responsive to what is in and hot on the market. And that is giving enormous headaches to traditional retailers who are only thinking about a few collections a year.

Writing

Task 1

1

In 1776, Adam Smith described how an “invisible hand” guides companies as they strive for profits, and that hand leads them to decisions that benefit society. Smith’s insights led him to conclude that profit maximization is the right goal for a business and that the free

Provide background information about the traditional goal of companies, under the guidance of the “invisible hand.”

enterprise system is best for society. But the world has changed since 1776. Firms today are much larger, they operate globally, they have thousands of employees, and they are owned by millions of stockholders. This makes us wonder if the “invisible hand” still provides reliable guidance. Should companies still try to maximize profits, or should they take a broader view and take more balanced actions designed to benefit customers, employees, suppliers, and society as a whole?

Source:

The passage is taken from *Fundamentals of Financial Management* (13th edition, 2015).

Narrow down to the topic of the essay: Companies in the modern world need a different goal.

Thesis statement (in the form of a question): Should companies still try to maximize profits, or should they take a broader view and take more balanced actions designed to benefit customers, employees, suppliers, and society as a whole?

2

Chinese companies are opening up a new front in global competition. It centers on what we call accelerated innovation – that is, reengineering research and development and innovation processes to make new product development dramatically faster and less costly. What is distinctive about the strongest Chinese competitors is their capability to combine accelerated innovation with rapid scale-up to high volume at low cost, and to apply these techniques across a wide variety of traditional industries. We saw accelerated innovation being deployed in Chinese industries ranging from pharmaceuticals, telecommunications and information technology to medical and industrial equipment, consumer electronics and e-business. Although it may not impact companies that are consistently able to deliver breakthrough innovations, it presents real threats and opportunities to many mainstream competitors.

Source:

The passage is taken from the article “Accelerated innovation: The new challenge from China” (2014).

Provide background information about accelerated innovation.

Narrow down to the topic of the essay: Chinese companies’ deployment of accelerated innovation.

Thesis statement: Although it may not impact companies that are consistently able to deliver breakthrough innovations, it presents real threats and opportunities to many mainstream competitors.

Text A

新零售如何将线下世界搬到线上

关于英国商业街衰落的话题十分盛行，人们很容易认为零售的未来完全是关于电子商务的兴起。但其实它并非一定就是线上或线下的问题，更重要的是如何形成已有的实体店与电子商务和技术之间的最佳结合，以创造无缝的、特别便利的、有趣的购物方式。

迄今为止，今年的“双十一”购物狂欢节是最令人印象深刻的新零售力量的展示。“双十一”是如今全球最大的购物盛会，今年的购物节不仅创造了254亿美元的空前收益，而且重要的是促使参与的品牌以各种不同的创新和沉浸式方式与消费者沟通互动，这也有助于品牌的建设。

在“双十一”的24小时中，日益崛起的3亿中国中产阶级用智能手机完成了15亿支付交易，比去年增加了41%，购买的产品从鞋子和口红到电子产品、时装和家居用品。

面对如此令人难以置信的数字时，在英国商业街上占据重要地位的传统零售商感到有些沮丧也情有可原。但他们应该这样吗？进一步研究“双十一”的成功以及支撑它的新零售原则表明，所有零售商都有实实在在的机会吸引新客户，并可通过更有效地融合线上和线下渠道来增加现有客户的花销。

定义新零售业

新零售是阿里巴巴通过实现线上和线下世界之间的无缝衔接来重新定义商业的战略。新零售有两个关键方面。首先，与线下商家合作，帮助他们的业务向数字化方向转变，以便他们能够为客户提供更加个性化的购物体验；其次，我们如何回应那些将购物视为社交活动并最终将其作为一种娱乐形式的中国消费者。

在今年的“双十一”购物狂欢节上，约有10万家“智能商店”帮助商家在中国334个城市提供定制购物服务，并在52个商场开设了60家快闪店，使国际品牌能够针对他们的品牌和产品策划特定的消费者体验。

通过技术的使用，智能商店帮助品牌提供更加个性化和互动的购物体验。例如，在某些商店，如果产品没有库存，购物者可以在电子“云架”上浏览更丰富的产品类别。当一个货品被拿起时，这些货架会自动识别，在相邻屏幕上提供有关该物品的信息。然后，顾客可以在那里通过智能手机购买商品，这意味着他们在商场继续购物时不用提任何袋子。

线下转向线上……

相对于线下，线上最大优势之一通常是能通过挖掘电子商务生成的数据池，确定优惠推荐和新产品建议。

这是线下零售商的最大机遇之一，也是一个有很多激动人心的技术创新的领域。虚拟更衣室和魔镜是将线上技术引入线下商店的两个实例。魔镜运用扩增实境技术帮助用户在屏幕上试

用各种口红和眼妆组合，以找到他们最喜欢的品种。这将“先试后买”的模式提升至一个全新的水平，欧莱雅在中国的许多地方已经尝试了这项技术。

虚拟更衣室名副其实，它将顾客的照片放在店内的一个大屏幕上，让他们在瞬间“试穿”多种不同的服装——甚至可以搭配发型，整个过程省去了要换好几次衣服的麻烦。这些刺激新颖的新技术既有趣又实用——构建最佳的店内体验，并为消费者提供帮助。

盒马鲜生超市是近期阿里巴巴在中国最引人注目的举措之一。盒马鲜生将整个商店数字化，为消费者提供三合一零售体验，这一体验涵盖现代都市购物者的所有模式和要求，包括技术驱动的在线交付，以及店内购买和店内消费的无缝衔接。消费者不仅可以在线下订单，还可以扫描商店中的每个产品以查找相关信息。相应地，阿里巴巴可以利用消费者数据，包括购买习惯、购买历史和商店访问情况，为每个消费者提供更个性化的体验。

走向移动端

与中国消费者一样，英国消费者也对手机乐此不疲，并且越来越多地希望能用手机来管理生活的各个方面。我们推动移动端参与度的一个很好的例子是今年“双十一”购物节开启的“即看即买”时装秀。在电视或手机上观看时装秀时，顾客可以即时在线购买他们在T台上看到的衣服，支付宝付款后在天猫平台完成订单。这是抓住当下的购物冲动并将其转化为销量的好方法。

制造乐趣

游戏化现在正流行于各个不同的行业，零售业也不例外。让消费者玩游戏可以为品牌和零售商形成极大的吸引力。例如，与朋友竞赛赢取优惠券的活动利用社交媒体潮流，将购物变成共享体验。阿里巴巴的“捉猫”游戏更进一步：借助扩增实境技术，用户一路追着天猫猫到商店、餐馆和咖啡馆，想抓住它以赢得在商店消费的优惠券。中国消费者将购物视为一种娱乐形式，这种趋势在英国也越来越明显。例如，去年威斯菲尔德购物中心用虚拟现实展示了最新一季的流行趋势，让潜在的购物者可以根据自己的喜好定制设计。

这一切都表明，对于有远见的英国零售商来说，线下/线上无缝衔接的新零售世界大有可为，能为21世纪热衷于移动互联的购物者提供他们想要和即将期待的沉浸式跨渠道体验。“双十一”是进入下一个零售时代的窗口，“现实”和“虚拟”之间旧的界限正在消解，这种变革性的商业模式正在中国创建并输出到世界其他地方。

Text B

零售购买今后的出路何在？

随着2018年拉开序幕，对于零售商而言，既有好消息又有坏消息。好消息是，在圣诞假期购买季期间，消费者的口袋比过去十年的任何时候都要宽敞。所有收入汇总后，预计2017年底的零售总额将增长4%至5%。

至于坏消息，有三个引起了我的注意，它们均显示一些零售商依然在挣扎。西尔斯——昔

日国内零售商的领军者——宣布它将关闭全国100多家商店。在我的家乡辛辛那提，市中心的梅西商店宣布即将歇业。今年年底《华尔街日报》的一篇文章聚焦北卡罗来纳州许多小城镇的困境，这些城镇连银行这种典型的消费者服务都没有。

当然，这些变化背后的一个因素是人们现在购物的方式不同了。回顾20世纪50年代和60年代我成长过程中的岁月，人们必须去商店才能买到东西，当时连送货上门都是稀罕事。城里、镇上、十字路口到处都是争夺消费者的零售商。

当互联网从20世纪90年代开始大规模使用时，这一切都开始发生变化。在线购买成为可能，并自此持续增长。虽然网上购买与实体店购物相比仍然居于次要地位，但在过去十年中，随点即买技术的使用量增加了两倍。如果这种趋势持续下去，网络购买将在短短几十年内成为大多数人购物的方式。

对此，传统的实体零售商一直在关注，他们明白必须改变才能生存。只是有些零售商没法改变那么快，无法阻止账本底线被攻破。唯一的选择——除了认输之外——就是关闭不景气的商店，对生意较为兴旺的经销店进行重塑。

尽管如此，我认为几家全国知名的零售商可能会在未来几年内退出市场。这可能确实有助于尚存的零售商生存下去，因为他们在市场上的竞争对手将因此减少。

但实体零售商必须做些什么才能在网上购买的涌现潮中生存下来？首先，他们必须接受网上购买的形式，许多传统零售商已经这么做了，他们已经有了在线购买的选择方案，提供商店提货或送货上门服务。此外，零售商简化了已购商品直接退回商店的程序——这对于网络购物正变得非常重要。

但不要指望网络卖家会置身事外，他们中有很多已经提供了免费退货，而其他人已经设置——或计划设置——实体地点用于快速收取退货。

然而，在与网络巨头的持续对决中，传统零售商仍然有两个优势可以挖掘。其一是个人服务。尽管网络销售商已经开发了多种个性化购买方式，并兼顾个人品味，但有时无法替代亲眼看到商品，并从训练有素的销售人员那儿得到即时回应和建议。

另一个优势是实体的便利性。网络购买的便利性体现在购买方式上，但网络购买并不便于消费者在购买前查看商品。传统的实体商店意识到这一点，这是未来住宅区可能散布着便利店、商店、餐馆和娱乐场所的一个重要原因。年轻的家庭——千禧一代——喜欢这样的生活，正在迅速迈向退休、空巢的婴儿潮一代也同样喜欢。如果你将这两个群体放在一起，你就拥有了全国的大多数买家。

因此，传统零售业的未来可能是回归过去。与把大量商店聚集到商场或购物中心的做法不同，零售店将会开在离家几步之遥的地方。

农村有许多地区都在努力留住人和商店，但传统零售商是否会进入农村地区呢？所有经济动力都倾向城市地区，而非农村社区，未来学家认为在接下来的几十年中几乎不会有变化。

因此，具有讽刺意味的是，网络购买、网络银行、甚至是网络医疗保健最终可能对农村地区比对城市地区更重要。也许当我们在将来回顾过去的时候，我们会发现为农村地区提供服务、资助、健康保障、发展支持的将是互联网和互联网连接。

当然，这都是基于我目前了解的发展趋势、挑战和机遇所做的猜测。有些改变游戏规则的

技术——例如人工智能或虚拟化技术——可能会改变零售购买的各个方面；事实上，他们可以改变一切的一切！

不过，就目前而言，一场真正的重量级拳王争霸赛正在进行，一边是传统零售商，一边是网络零售新贵。我们只希望当比赛结束时，裁判会将我们买家裁定为赢家！