

Singles' Day: the online shopping event that rules them all

Ever heard of Singles' Day? It's the world's biggest online shopping day, turning over \$38bn last year - more than double the \$16.8bn brought in during Black Friday and Cyber Monday combined.



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Matthew Leighton, spokesperson for OneDayOnly.co.za, explains that the sale event – which was introduced by Chinese e-tailing giant Alibaba back in 2009 – is all about encouraging singles to celebrate their independence while shopping up a storm.

“Singles’ Day occurs annually on 11 November (11/11), which is numerically said to resemble ‘bare branches’ – the Chinese expression for unmarried bachelors. While the exact origins of Singles’ Day are up for debate, the story involves breaking the stigma that being single is an undesirable lifestyle,” Leighton says.



Alibaba sets Singles Day sales record of \$38.4bn

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Of the \$38bn revenue recorded by Alibaba on Singles’ Day last year, \$12bn was generated within the first hour, and the first \$1bn took just under 5 minutes. To put that into perspective, last year Amazon.com reported sales of \$7.16bn on Prime Day, one of its single most successful sales days in the year. Its Black Friday and Cyber Monday figures also didn’t come close to the benchmark set by Singles’ Day.

“Whilst Alibaba is not credited with the concept, they certainly put Singles' Day on the map when launching the shopping event back in 2009,” says Leighton. “Targeting the Chinese and Asian population, Alibaba marketed Singles' Day as the day to treat yourself.”

The e-commerce giant has gone on to achieve tremendous success over the past decade with the annual event, with this year set to be no exception. Alibaba's Singles' Day figures are estimated to be higher than what Amazon will achieve in their entire fourth quarter.



Big, bigger, biggest: Black Friday, Cyber Monday and Singles Day

Norman Shaw 29 Nov 2018



Singles' Day in SA

Considering that South Africa recently broke e-commerce records of its own, Leighton says OneDayOnly.co.za has decided to give Singles' Day a go. “The sentiment is the same: highly discounted products intended to offer people the opportunity to spoil themselves. In order to gear up for demand, we’ve launched our very own app for even faster, easier purchasing.”

Leighton adds that while Singles' Day is traditionally aimed at a younger, tech-savvy audience, everyone can get involved. Although OneDayOnly doesn't expect to see figures reaching Black Friday-levels, it's likely that Singles' Day will see continued uptake each year, as Alibaba continues to push the mark of what e-commerce companies can achieve.

Superbalist and select brands from TFG and the Cape Union Mart Group are also participating in the Singles' Day sale event this year.

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