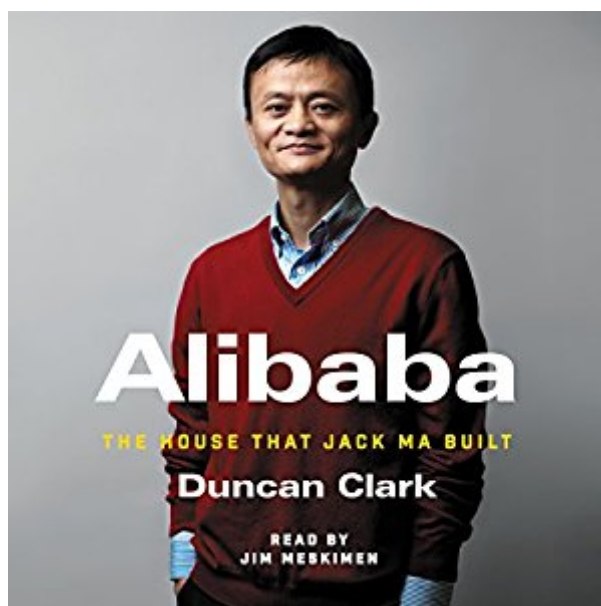


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Alibaba: The House That Jack Ma Built



Synopsis

An engrossing insider's account of how a teacher built one of the world's most valuable companies - rivaling Walmart and - and forever reshaped the global economy. In just a decade and a half, Jack Ma, a man from modest beginnings who started out as an English teacher, founded Alibaba and built it into one of the world's largest companies, an e-commerce empire on which hundreds of millions of Chinese consumers depend. Alibaba's \$25 billion IPO in 2014 was the largest global IPO ever. A Rockefeller of his age who is courted by CEOs and presidents around the world, Jack is an icon for China's booming private sector and the gatekeeper to hundreds of millions of middle-class consumers. Duncan Clark first met Jack in 1999 in the small apartment where Jack founded Alibaba. Granted unprecedented access to a wealth of new material including exclusive interviews, Clark draws on his own experience as an early advisor to Alibaba and two decades in China chronicling the Internet's impact on the country to create an authoritative, compelling narrative account of Alibaba's rise. How did Jack overcome his humble origins and early failures to achieve massive success with Alibaba? How did he outsmart rival entrepreneurs from China and Silicon Valley? Can Alibaba maintain its 80 percent market share? As it forges ahead into finance and entertainment, are there limits to Alibaba's ambitions? How does the Chinese government view its rise? Will Alibaba expand further overseas, including in the US? Clark tells Alibaba's tale in the context of China's momentous economic and social changes, illuminating an unlikely corporate titan as never before.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An interesting read for a non-techie. Jack Ma's perseverance in trying various enterprises in China without the benefit of the internet is well described. The description of the volatility of the .com start-ups was hair-raising for the uninitiated. The convergence of sheer luck, keeping your powder dry and recognition of opportunities in addition to hard work made Jack so successful. He proved that western companies have a lot to learn about the Chinese business climate. Written in a way that was understandable for the low-tech reader.

Whilst this book is focused on Jack Ma, it is also a story of the development of the web in China and the role of foreign companies like eBay and Yahoo, as well as assorted investors. Overall it makes the story stronger, but the depth of Ma suffers for it. Also, certain parts could do with a re-edit, for consistent split between the notes and the main text. All in all a good time capsule, well worth picking up as a history rather than a pure biography

In Alibaba, Clark winds back the hands of time and gives you a front row seat to the frame-by-frame unfolding of one of Asia's supernovas, the namesake of the book. Lyrically infused with verbatim quotes from alternative technology icons of our day, Clark's narrative weaves together eye-catching headlines and Chinese mythology in sepia vignettes, so authentic that the "Jack Magic" in the scene palpably streams forth from the pages of the book. Telling the story of the founder, Jack Ma, illustrating Ma's philosophy and praxeology, the "Jack Magic", and illuminating the role it played in Alibaba's runaway success is where Clark shines. Clark's discussion of the business environment, competitor strategies, and the later maturity of the internet industry indicates a lack of knowledge and insight, with various actors coming across as dry and two-dimensional. It feels tedious to read. While the narration leaves much to be wanted in several departments, the story itself inspires, and the zeitgeist of a few key moments are well preserved. As a Stanford graduate student and Silicon Valley resident, I found a window into an entirely different world - a different dogma - of entrepreneurship; refreshing in a scene where a multitude of playbooks and listicles have converged a set of what seemed to be immutable rules.

A lucid, insightful and inspiring account of an extraordinary man written by a man that is hard to

match in terms of China exposure, observant eye, impeccable brain and will to share it all with us. Read it! 1001 mistakes to success. 1993 Golden Bridge, 1'300'000'000 to cross. Aliyun. Chief People Officer. Constrain to innovate. Crocodile in the Yangtze, not shark in the ocean (to start with). David strategy, Goliath returns. Decide and be rigorous, also with CEO and COO. Digital Yiwu. Edge ain't built on a paved highway. ET is precioussssss. Fertilize and cultivate, don't only harvest. Focus on shrimps. From selling in China to selling to China. Google, cocoos Yahoo. GS, tststs. INTensiv or EXcompany. Jack magic. Jack, marshmallow test uberlord. Know how not know who. Knowledge economy not information society. Local savvy vs international on fits it all. Convenience. Long march on the highway. More Morleys, please. Multiple perspectives to iron Triangle. O2O consolidation. Of sleek and shrill websites. Of wallets and portals. Partners, not employees. Periphery or burn in fixed cost hell. PerseVERYance. Profit, Philosophy and Philanthropy. SARS glue. Six Veins DNA and remuneration. SoftBank, HardHead. Swiss towards CCP. Taobao undercover. Variable Interest Entity and its rich, fee-producing complexity. Warrior philosopher. WeHongBao effectiveness. Witts, Wit, Whitman "de nuevo. Work happily, live seriously. Xia Hai dear Haiguis.

I guess the three star review was directed more at Jack than the author. This guy Jack seemed at first to be nice and innovative. But I cannot get past what he did to Yahoo, which I read as taking a low road out of a difficult situation. Also, I cannot understand how he would rationalize stealing a company from his shareholders (the AliPay ordeal). When this scandal breaks out, he changes the subject and throws his Japanese partner under the bus for not paying his employees. I started the book biased in favor of Jack, but now I don't think I would invest in any of his companies. Regarding the author, who am I to judge him? All I will say is that I enjoyed a lot more the storytelling styles from other biographies such as Steve Jobs and Elon Musk.

Disliked the book from page 1. Really quite boring and didn't offer any interesting nuggets about himself, the startup or crazy/fun stories. If you want to start your own company and want to understand what's involved this would be a good book. But for entertainment I wouldn't suggest it.

Good read about his life and conditions in China which have a major impact on why Alibaba is so successful in China. Interesting to see how many of the entrepreneurs grew up in marginal conditions.

Duncan Clark presents a readable and often gripping account of the rise of Alibaba, one of China's iconic firms and an aspiring global giant. It illuminates all the contradictions and opportunities of the new China, from tensions between government ministries and firms like Alibaba which are pushing into areas such as finance and media once dominated by government, to the fierce competition between e-commerce and media giants within China that will help shape the country's future and its further engagement with the world. Should be required reading for anyone interested in understanding China and its global trajectory.....

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