



THE FUTURE IS SMALL

The Future Of Business

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TABLE
of
CONTENTS

Preface	011
Part 1: Next 30 Years	016
Chapter 1 Entering the DT Era	018
1.1 <i>What is DT?</i>	
1.2 <i>From IT to DT</i>	
1.3 <i>What's next?</i>	
Chapter 2 Inclusive Globalisation	028
2.1 <i>Globalisation is not the problem</i>	
2.2 <i>On improving globalisation</i>	
2.3 <i>Make globalisation inclusive</i>	
2.4 <i>Prioritise globalisation</i>	
2.5 <i>Globalisation is the solution</i>	
Chapter 3 New Retail. New Manufacturing	040
3.1 <i>The dawn of new retail</i>	
3.2 <i>From satisfying to creating needs</i>	
3.3 <i>Experiencing new retail</i>	
3.4 <i>Next, new manufacturing</i>	
3.5 <i>Made in Internet</i>	
Chapter 4 Embracing AI	052
4.1 <i>Anxious about AI</i>	
4.2 <i>AI is not out to compete with humans</i>	
4.3 <i>Don't fear AI</i>	
4.4 <i>Avoid Red Flag Act from happening again</i>	
4.5 <i>Still plenty of jobs</i>	
4.6 <i>Lives will be improved</i>	

Chapter 5 The Double H Industry	066
5.1 <i>Focus on the Double H</i>	
5.2 <i>Desperate need for Health and Happiness</i>	
5.3 <i>Food for healthy and happy minds</i>	
5.4 <i>Health and wellness – a growing trend</i>	
Part 2: Below 30 employees	078
Chapter 6 Small Rules!	080
6.1 <i>Small is beautiful</i>	
6.2 <i>E-commerce for small business</i>	
6.3 <i>Small business, this is your time</i>	
6.4 <i>How to be small and powerful</i>	
Chapter 7 At Your Service	096
7.1 <i>It starts with new manufacturing</i>	
7.2 <i>Competing for the best service</i>	
7.3 <i>Experience is the key to excellent service</i>	
Chapter 8 Harness Woman Power	112
8.1 <i>The way she cares</i>	
8.2 <i>The way she thinks</i>	
8.3 <i>The way she knows</i>	
8.4 <i>The way she perseveres</i>	
8.5 <i>The way she embraces changes</i>	
8.6 <i>The way she improves the world</i>	
8.7 <i>A balanced world</i>	
Chapter 9 Run It Well	126
9.1 <i>A good company is not about size</i>	
9.2 <i>Look inside, not outside</i>	
9.3 <i>Don't chase wealth; assume responsibility</i>	

Part 3: Age 30 and below	138
Chapter 10 Education Redefined	142
<i>10.1 Be ready for change</i>	
<i>10.2 Redefining education</i>	
<i>10.3 More resources at the early stage</i>	
<i>10.4 Brilliant future awaiting our kids</i>	
Chapter 11 The 3Qs	152
<i>11.1 Knowing the 3Qs</i>	
<i>11.2 What Qs do you need to succeed?</i>	
<i>11.3 IQ – the key to not losing quickly</i>	
<i>11.4 EQ – the key to be successful</i>	
<i>11.5 LQ – the key to be respected</i>	
Chapter 12 A Message for You	166
<i>12.1 Job-hopping? Think twice</i>	
<i>12.2 Have a silly dream? Get it started</i>	
<i>12.3 Failures? Never give up</i>	
<i>12.4 Have time? Invest it wisely</i>	
<i>12.5 Going solo? No, get a team</i>	

“The future world is about a competition on innovation. The world population will become bigger. Only by injecting the DNA of innovation into the world will there be a future for the world. The next 30 years is an opportunity for everyone; every government and country has to make policies for the next 30 years and for their young people. I appeal to all countries to make policies to assist the young people below 30 years old and small companies with fewer than 30 employees.”

– *Jack Ma*

PREFACE

*“The next 30 years is going to be critical for the world.
Make the technology inclusive, make the world change. Pay
attention to those people who are 30 years old and below.
Those are the internet generation. They will change the world.”
– Jack Ma*

Think – when was the last time you heard people complaining that the industry they worked in was dying? that the economy was stuck in the doldrums? that their companies were no match for the big players? that their young staff were difficult to manage and not as compliant as the previous generations? that they feared artificial intelligence would dominate the world and take over jobs meant for their children?

The list can go on and on...

Yes, the future is going to be vastly different from the present. You can bet your bottom dollar on this. But instead of waiting fatalistically for the future to overwhelm us, Ma is grabbing the future by its horns. Over the last few years, he has been trotting the world, especially to underdeveloped and developing countries, to talk to young entrepreneurs and students about what to expect of and how to prepare for the future.

In all his talks and media interviews, Ma has continuously preached his 30-30-30 ideology, which he believes is the foundation for any preparations for the future.

The 30-30-30 focus aims to make the future more inclusive than the present, raise small companies, advance new industries and opportunities, and prepare the youths today to become leaders that will shape a whole new world.

Ma's advice is firstly, **pay attention to the next 30 years**. They will be critical for the world. Every technology revolution takes 50 years. In the first 20 years, the companies/technologies are established. The implications of the technological developments will become evident in the next 30 years.

Secondly, **pay attention to the 30-year-olds and below**. They are the generations born and raised in the internet era. They will become more and more influential. They are the generations who believe and use the internet. When they reach 50 years old, they will be the ones who will become the leaders who change the world.

Thirdly, **pay attention to companies that have fewer than 30 employees**, that is, the small businesses. Quoting from the movie *Forrest Gump*, Ma said, "Nobody makes money catching whales. People make money catching shrimps." Remember Ma's all-time mantra, "Small is beautiful. Small is powerful."

We have carefully planned the contents of this book according to the 30-30-30 focus, sharing many of Ma's incredible insights of the future, and how we can prepare ourselves to welcome the new Data Technology and Artificial Intelligence era, and get ready for all the uncertainties lying ahead.

This book is not another Jack Ma's biography that talks about his entrepreneurial journey. This book will delve into how the future will unfold for businesses and companies.

Like a prophet calling people to prepare for what's ahead, Ma is passionately sharing his vision of the future so that they are not taken by surprise. Believe it when Ma says the future is all about the 30s. The future is small, yet beautiful.

The future is small, yet beautiful.

Part 1: Next 30 Years



The next 30 years is a critical and pivotal period for the world. Ma is categorically convinced of this and has strongly advised that we pay very close attention to the developments in the next three decades.

According to him, technology revolutions happen in a 50-year cycle. During the first 20 years, companies and technologies are established, and their technological developments will be seen over the next 30 years.

The first technology revolution caused World War I while the second caused World War II. However, the third technology revolution, which is happening now, will not destroy lives though its repercussions are still worldwide. Instead, it will “bring life” – by creating jobs. Ma is sure of this. He calls for optimism towards the third technology revolution, and recommends that we grab this opportunity to be part of this movement to change the world.

“ The changes in the next 30 years will be beyond our wildest imagination. The coming 30 years will have a huge impact on each and every industry. If you are pessimistic about the future, it will crush you; however, if you are optimistic about the future, you’ll be flooded with abundant opportunities. ” – Jack Ma

CHAPTER 1

Entering the DT Era

“Throughout history, technological disruptions have followed similar trajectories: 20 years of technological disruption followed by 30 years of further rapid change as new technologies are applied throughout society. The internet revolution is a historical inflection point, much like when electricity was introduced, and it may have an even greater impact. Over the next 30 years, with computing power as the new ‘technology breakthrough’ and data as the new ‘natural resource’, the landscape of retail, financial services, manufacturing and entertainment will be transformed.”

– Ma’s letter to shareholders in 2016

Chapter 1
Entering the DT Era

Many, if not most, of us are living life 'online'. From shopping to banking, entertainment and communicating, we prefer to do them in front of a screen. Thanks to the Internet, we can now hire people to run errands for us, pay our bills online, do our banking, buy things and have them deliver to our doorstep, etc. Inevitably, we are heading towards a cashless society.

Now, let's see our online habits from a different perspective – what do we have to give online in order to get the things we need offline? That's right – our personal data!

We give our bank account details, email addresses, and all sorts of personal information on the Internet in return for the service we need. So, where does this data go to? Where is it stored? How is it used? And gasp... is it safe? How is this collection of this enormous amount of data going to impact the world?

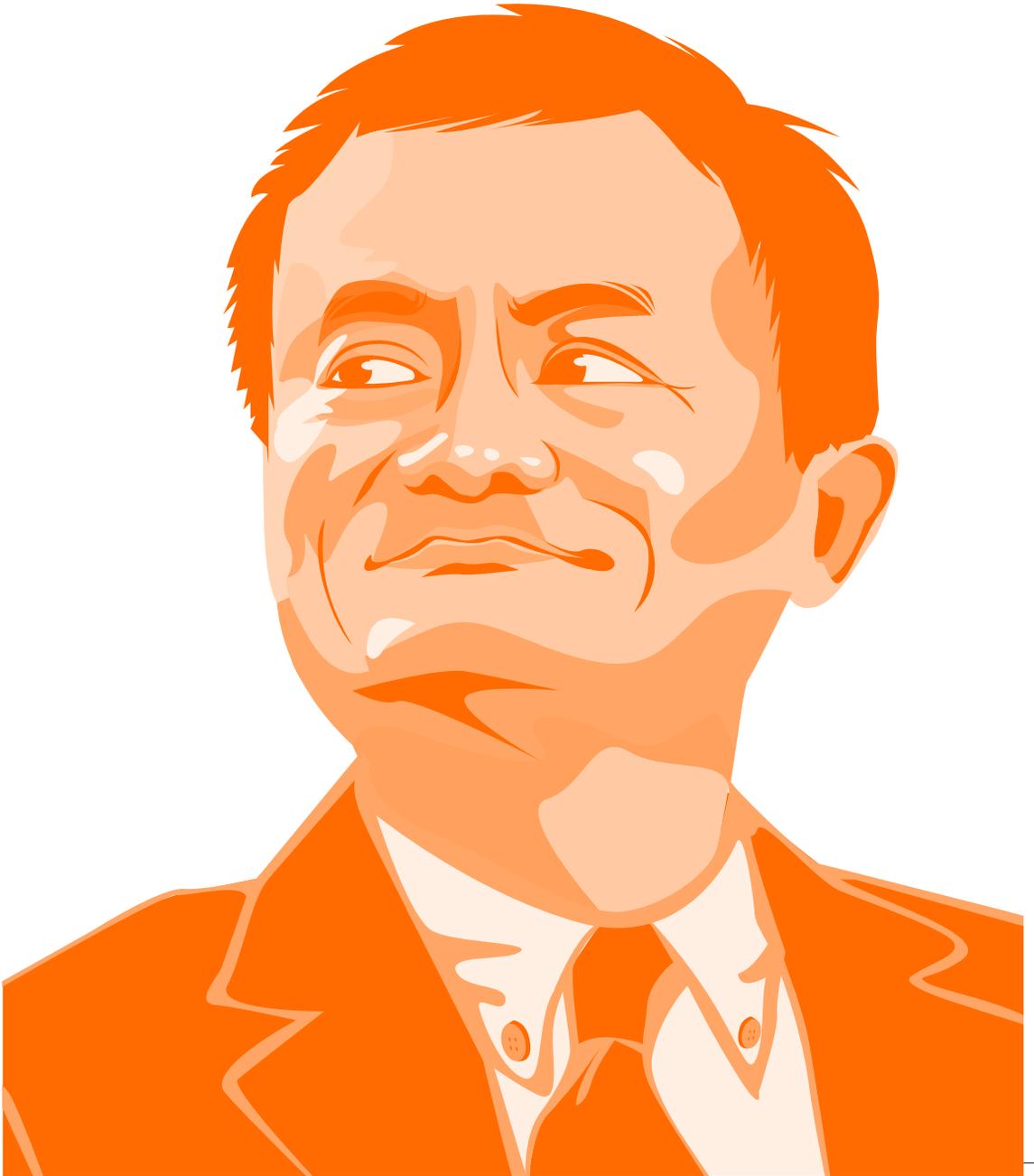
Ma once said, "Everywhere, people worry about data, privacy and security. People worry about anything, but this means great opportunities are coming. You cannot stop this (data collection) and the only thing (you can do) is embrace it or change yourself."

“New Manufacturing is the perfect blend between manufacturing and service. A company’s competitive strength won’t lie in its manufacturing capabilities, but is rather measured by its underlying innovative thinking, customer experience and service capabilities.”

– *Jack Ma*

*Anything that young people love,
it has the future.*





Part 2: Below 30 employees



The power of mega companies is slowly declining as more small businesses gain exposure via the Internet and reap the benefits of globalisation.

The world should thus pay attention to smaller companies, especially those with fewer than 30 employees, according to Ma, who is a stout believer of “Small is Beautiful. Small is Powerful”.

Ma observed that in the past, the world focused on supporting the big companies, which comprised only 20 percent of all companies, while ignoring the 80 percent of small companies. That has to change, Ma said.

The world should ensure small businesses and developing countries benefit from globalisation, and offer young people the opportunity to participate in global efforts to create a more inclusive, sustainable and healthy environment.

Take the lead from *Forrest Gump*, Ma’s favourite Hollywood movie: “Nobody makes money catching whales. People make money catching shrimps.”

“ In the next 30 years, 80 percent of small business will benefit from globalisation. In 2030, more than 85 percent of business will be e-commerce. 99 percent of trade will be online and less than 1 percent of trade will be offline. ” – Jack Ma



After celebrating his 55th birthday and stepping down from his position as the executive chairman of Alibaba, Ma went back to his apartment in Hupan Garden, Hangzhou (the birthplace of Alibaba) to reflect.

“ I hope that 60, 80 years from now, people will still remember this apartment. We should never lose the dreams we dreamed in this apartment.” (Chapter 11, Page 163) (Source: Internet)



On August 2, 2018, Starbucks Coffee Company and Alibaba Group announced a deep, strategic “New Retail” partnership that will enable a seamless Starbucks Experience and transform the coffee industry in China. (Chapter 3, Page 45)
In the photo, Starbucks executive chairman Howard Schultz shows Alibaba executive chairman Jack Ma around the Shanghai Roastery. (Joshua Trujillo / Starbucks Newroom) (Source: <https://stories.starbucks.com/stories/2017/starbucks-reserve-roastery-opens-in-shanghai/>)

*Children aren't worried about the future.
Young people aren't worried about the future;
they're worried about us - us leading them
into the future we envision.*

Part 3: Age 30 and below



Ma has a lofty view of young adults aged 30 years and below. So high is his regard of their potential that the last part of his 30-30-30 advice to the world is: Pay attention to young people aged 30 years and below.

Ma has always urged for respect to be accorded to this group of people, born and raised in the Internet era. They are the generation who believe in and are not intimidated by technology.

“Trust the young people; trust this generation’s innovation. They’re making new things, bringing innovation every day. We need them because consumers want new, cheap, good and unique things. If we can create these kinds of things for consumers, they (the consumers) will come,” Ma said.

He called for global cooperation from all parties – private sector, government, citizens, academics and civil society – to use technology to achieve a more prosperous world that offers more opportunities to and build trust among people.

“We need to focus on making technology inclusive so that more women, young people, rural folks, small businesses and developing countries can benefit. We also need to rethink our education system to prepare our young people for the future, instead of for yesterday,” Ma advised.

Believe in our young people because they will be able to solve the problems that are plaguing us today. Remember what Ma

once said, “Children aren’t worried about the future. **Young people aren’t worried about the future; they’re worried about us – us leading them into the future we envision.**”

Help young people. Help small guys. Because small guys will become big. Young people carry the seed you bury in their minds, and when they grow up, they will change the world.

– Jack Ma

“Instead of learning from other people’s success, learn from their mistakes. Most of the people who fail share common reasons (of failure), whereas success can be attributed to various different reasons.”

– Jack Ma