



Alibaba.com Opens its First European Office in Geneva

Geneva, October 2, 2007 – Alibaba.com, the world's number one online marketplace for international trade dedicated to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), today opened its first European office in Geneva. Located at the very heart of Europe, Geneva offers an ideal setting to develop European business, one of the most important markets for Alibaba.com in terms of active members. From this strategic location, Alibaba.com will help Swiss and European SMEs to become more competitive by making their import and export business easier in a growing global economy.

Founded in 1999, Alibaba.com, the flagship business of the Alibaba Group based in Hangzhou in eastern China, provides an efficient, trusted platform where SME buyers and suppliers across the globe can connect and exchange raw materials, goods, manufactured products and even services. In just over eight years, Alibaba.com has built a global community of more than 24 million members from over 200 countries and regions, covering some 30 industries and more than 5,000 product categories. From the beginning, Alibaba.com set out to offer simple, efficient solutions to SMEs to enable them to become more competitive on a global scale. As highlighted by Jack Ma, Chairman and CEO of Alibaba Group, "We want to help SMEs from all over the world grow their business and benefit from cross border trade. Alibaba.com is like the World Trade Organisation for SMEs."

SMEs are the leading economic engine across the globe. In Europe, there are more than 19 million SMEs, who employ over 97 million people. These European SME's make up 99.7 percent of the total number of companies, and are the principal source of employment and wealth in the European Union. Switzerland has a similar landscape, with SMEs forming the backbone of the Swiss economy: 99.7 percent of Swiss companies employ less than 250 people, and together they represent two-thirds of the working population.

"The large concentration of SMEs is one of the reasons why, in just a few years, Europe has become one of the most important markets for Alibaba.com in terms of active members," said Kenneth Liu, Alibaba.com Vice President of Global Operations. "It was therefore a logical step for us to open our first European office in the region to be closer to our members. Our presence in Europe will make European and international trade even easier for SMEs in the region, as we will be concentrating on developing regional business, attracting new members and providing customer service directly."

"When it came to choosing a European base, we quickly decided on Geneva, as it is ideally situated at the very heart of Europe and offers a pool of qualified professionals of international calibre, as well as a highly efficient business infrastructure," said Abir Oreibi, Director of Alibaba.com, Europe and the Middle East.

The success of Alibaba.com's marketplace is largely down to its efficiency and ease of use, enabling SMEs to save time by making global sourcing available 24/7 and removing barriers of geographies and time zones. Studies show that Alibaba.com effectively enables its members to reduce their supply cycles by up to 75 percent. What's more, compared to other business-to-business websites, Alibaba.com is neutral, being equally focused on buyers and sellers. Buyers use the site for free and have access to an active global supplier community and easy to use sourcing and communication tools. Sellers can also use the site for free, posting products to sell and searching for buyers. Premium fee-based packages are available for sellers who want to increase their exposure to potential buyers. Buyers and sellers meet online at Alibaba.com but transactions are completed offline.



Photos from the Geneva office opening on October 2, 2007