Wednesday, 09 November 2022

COMPANY UPDATE

Alibaba Group (9988 HK)

2QFY23 Results Preview And APSARA Conference Takeaways

The company is seeing a weaker-than-expected recovery in consumer spending due to disruptions by the ongoing implementation of lockdown measures. We remain cautiously optimistic on Alibaba given disruptions from periodic lockdowns weighing on 2QFY23 performance. Alibaba still offers an attractive risk-reward opportunity given the encouraging sentiment on the Single's Day pre-sales. Maintain BUY with target price lowered to HK\$127.00 (US\$120.00).

WHAT'S NEW

- 2QFY23 results preview. Alibaba Group's (Alibaba) 2QFY23 total revenue is estimated to grow 5% yoy to Rmb210.7b. We forecast customer management revenue to decline by 2% yoy, driven by weaker GMV growth in Sep 22 given weakened consumer sentiment. We expect to see a decline in total GMV given its exposure to the weak demand for discretionary items. The Local Consumer Services (LCS) segment is guided to deliver an accelerated growth of 29% yoy compared to +8% yoy in the same period last year. We estimate cloud revenue to deliver decelerated growth of 10% yoy to Rmb22b (vs 2QFY22: +22% yoy). Adjusted EBITDA is expected to improve with a 3% yoy growth from the previous -27%/-16% yoy plunge in 1QFY23/2QFY22, translated to an EBITDA margin of 17%. The improved profitability is mainly attributable to reduced losses from new strategic initiatives and the continued trend of cost optimisation.
- Better 3QFY23 underpinned by 11.11 shopping festival. The company reported swift Singles' Day pre-sales despite soft recovery and weakening consumer sentiment. 102 brands on Tabao and Tmall surpassed Rmb100m in an hour after the first round of sales. Taobao Live surged 600% yoy in the first hour while the live-streaming channel on Tmall exceeded Rmb100b in the first 20 minutes, outperforming its peers. The strong sales are continuously driven by unfulfilled demand for smartphone devices and essential goods. Amid the intense market competition, Alibaba can leverage on its strengthening customer loyalty to seize and secure market share from rivals such as short-form video platforms.
- At the AliCloud Summit and APSARA Conference ("云栖大会"), management blamed the latest growth slowdown in the cloud industry on less government spending, as well as the slower growth and policy impact on internet gaming and education industries. Alicloud expects the manufacturing industry and the increased content needs driven by Metaverse to be its next revenue growth engine. Management believes the impact of the CHIPS act for AliCloud is limited in the near term, as customers' high-end and massive computing power needs is limited in China currently. However, with the increase in demand for advanced cloud services in China, the management expect some challenges in the future, with current products becoming outdated if the global chip industry continues to develop at the current pace in the next few years.

KEY FINANCIALS

Year to 31 Mar (Rmbm)	2021	2022	2023F	2024F	2025F
Net turnover	717,289.0	853,062.0	922,360.4	1,026,273.3	1,101,554.6
EBITDA	128,494.0	110,201.0	137,095.4	171,437.5	183,360.6
Operating profit	89,678.0	69,638.0	91,163.6	126,792.2	140,133.8
Net profit (rep./act.)	150,308.0	54,696.0	91,813.3	119,874.5	130,996.0
Net profit (adj.)	171,985.0	136,388.0	130,210.8	164,640.1	180,476.0
EPS (Fen)	810.3	636.2	601.4	752.8	813.1
PE (x)	7.9	10.1	10.7	8.5	7.9
P/B (x)	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.0
EV/EBITDA (x)	10.4	12.2	9.8	7.8	7.3
Dividend yield (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net margin (%)	21.0	6.4	10.0	11.7	11.9
Net debt/(cash) to equity (%)	(29.5)	(14.9)	(21.8)	(27.9)	(33.7)
Interest cover (x)	n.a.	5.3	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
ROE (%)	17.6	5.7	9.0	10.3	9.8
Consensus net profit	-	-	136,753	162,210	182,556
UOBKH/Consensus (x)	-	-	0.95	1.01	0.99

Source: Alibaba Group, Bloomberg, UOB Kay Hian

BUY

(Maintained)

 Share Price
 HK\$69.70

 Target Price
 HK\$127.00

 Upside
 +82.2%

 (Previous TP
 HK\$129.00)

COMPANY DESCRIPTION

Alibaba Group is the largest e-commerce marketplace operator in China.

STOCK DATA

GICS sector Consumer Discretionary
Bloomberg ticker: 9988 HK Equity
Shares issued (m): 21,180.3
Market cap (HK\$m): 1,476,265.9
Market cap (US\$m): 188,061.7
3-mth avg daily t'over (US\$m): 493.5

Price Performance (%)

52-week h	igh/low	HK\$165.20/HK\$61.45				
1mth	3mth	6mth	1yr	YTD		
(14.3)	(25.0)	(22.9)	(56.4)	(41.4)		
Major Si	nareholde	rs		%		
Softbank			25			
Vanguard	Group		2.7			
BlackRock	k Inc		2.5			
FY23 NAV/Share (RMB) 48.99						
FY23 NAV/Share (RMB)						
FY23 Net	Cash/Share		10.75			

PRICE CHART



Source: Bloomberg

ANALYST(S)

Julia Pan Meng Yao +8621 5404 7225 ext 808 juliapan@uobkayhian.com



Wednesday, 09 November 2022

ESSENTIALS

Key takeaways from Alibaba Cloud Analyst Summit & APSARA Conference. Remarks by Alibaba's CEO, Daniel Zhang:

- Development of core competitiveness of Alicloud brought by debut of self-developed CIPU. The special processor CIPU aims to replace CPUs in managing and accelerating computing, storage and network resources. The integrated performance of "Feitian+CIPU" generally outpaced similar products in the industry by 20%. The CIPU architecture has laid a solid foundation for the full-stack of self-developed Alicloud infrastructure to be extensively built
- Cloud-native processor "Yitian 710" was unveiled in Oct 21. At present, the Yitian 710 cloud instance has been broadly adopted by many internet companies and the smartphone industry. The cost performance ratio of computing power has improved by more than 30%, while the power consumption per unit of computing power has been reduced by 60%. This is the first self-developed CPU for large-scale cloud application in China. During the Double 11 festival in 2021, the core trading system of Tmall's Double 11 was shifted smoothly to Yitian 710
- AliCloud is developing software to automate Al. A serverless framework gets rid of
 operation and maintenance issues while reducing the threshold of software development,
 rendering more pre-fabricated modules which sequentially improve software productivity. In
 the past, open-source has promoted the progress of software architecture. In the future,
 open-source will accelerate the progress and development of Al applications' basic models.
- Ample room for growth. AliCloud now has paying customers of 4m and has achieved profitability for the last seven consecutive quarters. According to Alicloud, over 62% of Ashare listed companies are AliCloud's customers and 21m companies and organisations use DingTalk. The management remains optimistic as the China cloud market is far from saturated. AliCloud is undertaking business restructuring to shift its customer base from the internet sector to retail and financial services, which currently accounts for 53% of the cloud revenue. The transition in customer mix will likely benefit the company as non-internet consumers are less-price sensitive. With this, we reckon the transition will bode well for Alicloud's top-line and bottom line in the upcoming quarters.
- Our forecasts. Cloud computing and internet infrastructure is expected to deliver a decelerated growth of 10% yoy to Rmb 22b (vs 2QFY22: +22% yoy). The company will streamline its non-profitable business offerings such as CDN (content delivery network) while emphasising more on higher margin products such as Al solutions. We forecast Alicloud's adjusted EBITA at Rmb400m for 2QFY23, with adjusted EBITA margin of 2%.
- 11.11 key focus lies in enhancing customer experience and customer loyalty amid weak GMV environment. For Alibaba, brand loyalty memberships allow brands to interact most directly with consumers and ensure a higher degree of certainty over sales. During the pre-sale period, over 4000 brands achieved >100% of member-led GMV yoy growth while brand members accounted for >50% of the GMV for 2700 prominent brands. Given the company's greater exposure to non-essential goods, it focuses on serving the consumer groups with higher spending power, while providing a matrix of consumer offerings with diversified value proposition for various user segments. Enhancement of customer loyalty and integration of offline and online offerings helped Alibaba to capture consumers' mind share and generate high-quality growth for the long term.

EARNINGS REVISION/RISK

- We lowered our 2QFY23 revenue estimate slightly by 3%, as our previous forecast had not
 factored in the soft recovery pace in consumer demand. FY23 revenue growth is estimated
 to be moderated at 6% yoy vs FY22's 19% yoy given that the near-term visibility remains
 unclear. We lower our FY23 net profit forecast by 1%, representing non-GAAP net margin of
 16%, down from 17% in FY22.
- **Risks:** a) Increasing e-commerce competition with PDD and JD.com, and newcomers such as Douyin, and b) increasing merchants' acquisition channels.

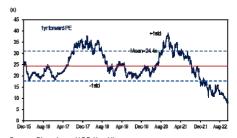
VALUATION/RECOMMENDATION

• Maintain BUY with a lower target price of HK\$127.00 (US\$120.00), as we roll forward our valuation to FY23. Our target price implies 16.5x FY23F forward PE against 19% EPS CAGR from FY23-26. The company is currently trading at 8.9x 12-month forward PE, 2.4SD lower than its historical mean of 24.4x.

SHARE PRICE CATALYST

 a) Successful listing of Ant Group, b) continued improvement in profitability of its cloud business, and c) continued growth from business expansion, particularly in the Southeast Asia market/lower-tier cities.

ALIBABA PE BAND



Source: Bloomberg, UOB Kay Hian

SOTP VALUATION (BASED ON 12-MONTH FORWARD)

	FY23 Revenue (HK\$,b)	EBITA (HK\$,bn)	EV / Revenue	EV / EBITA
Core+initiatives				
Core commerce business	845	150	1	8
Online marketing service	267	160		
Commission	109	65		
New retail + Alihealth	368	-77		
International commerce	77	2		
Cainiao	64		3	
Ele.me	62		3	
Cloud Computing, other	101		8	
Youku Tudou and other initiatives	42		1	
Total Core+initiatives valuation				
Total investees				
valuation Net cash				
Total	845	150	1	8
		Value to	<u> </u>	
	Value	BABA	HK\$	% of
	(HK\$,bn)	(HK\$,b)	per share	NAV

	(HK\$,bn)	(HK\$,b)	per share	NAV
Core+initiatives				
Core commerce business	1,196	1,196	54	43%
Online marketing service				
Commission				
New retail + Alihealth				
International commerce				
Cainiao	192	98	4	3%
Ele.me	186	186	8	7%
Cloud Computing, other	805	805	37	29%
Youku Tudou and other initiatives	42	42	2	1%
Total Core+initiatives valuation		2,326.1	106	83%
Total investees valuation		112	5	4%
Net cash		354	16	13%
Total	1,196	2,792	127	100.0%

Source: UOB Kay Hian



Regional Morning

DDOCIT * LOSS					DAL ANCE CUEET				
PROFIT & LOSS Year to 31 Mar (RMBm)	2022	2023F	2024F	2025F	BALANCE SHEET Year to 31 Mar (RMBm)	2022	2023F	2024F	2025F
Net turnover	853,062	922,360	1,026,273	1,101,555	Fixed assets	171,806	178,220	183,150	185,143
EBITDA	110,201	137,095	171,437	183,361	Other LT assets	885,212	929,337	981,264	1,041,116
Deprec. & amort.	40,563	45,932	44,645	43,227	Cash/ST investment	189,898	287,339	402,180	537,713
EBIT	69,638	91,164	126,792	140,134	Other current assets	448,637	475,900	510,174	540,028
Total other non-operating income	10,523	109	0	0	Total assets	1,695,553	1,870,796	2,076,767	2,304,000
Associate contributions	14,344	12,701	18,362	13,629	ST debt	8,841	8,841	8,841	8,841
Net interest income/(expense)	(20,611)	5,325	1,700	5,827	Other current liabilities	374,943	418,461	461,634	511,637
Pre-tax profit	73,894	109,298	146,854	159,590	LT debt	38,244	42,068	46,275	50,903
Tax	(26,815)	(24,670)	(33,418)	(36,659)	Other LT liabilities	191,332	191,332	191,332	191,332
Minorities	7,907	7,468	6,721	8,065	Shareholders' equity	958,134	1,086,034	1,244,627	1,417,229
Preferred dividends	(290)	(283)	(283)	0	Minority interest	124,059	124,059	124,059	124,059
Net profit	54,696	91,813	119,874	130,996	Total liabilities & equity	1,695,553	1,870,796	2,076,767	2,304,000
Net profit (adj.)	136,388	130,211	164,640	180,476					
CASH FLOW					KEY METRICS				
Year to 31 Mar (RMBm)	2022	2023F	2024F	2025F	Year to 31 Mar (%)	2022	2023F	2024F	2025F
Operating	142,759	146,816	166,981	186,307	Profitability				
Pre-tax profit	73,894	109,298	146,854	159,590	EBITDA margin	12.9	14.9	16.7	16.6
Tax	(26,815)	(24,670)	(33,418)	(36,659)	Pre-tax margin	8.7	11.8	14.3	14.5
Deprec. & amort.	40,563	45,932	44,645	43,227	Net margin	6.4	10.0	11.7	11.9
Associates	(6,093)	(5,518)	549	(3,282)	ROA	3.2	5.1	6.1	6.0
Working capital changes	(120,156)	16,255	8,899	20,149	ROE	5.7	9.0	10.3	9.8
Non-cash items	0	0	0	0					
Other operating cashflows	181,366	5,518	(549)	3,282	Growth				
Investing	(198,592)	(96,470)	(101,503)	(105,072)	Turnover	18.9	8.1	11.3	7.3
Capex (growth)	(42,028)	(40,830)	(40,299)	(37,747)	EBITDA	(14.2)	24.4	25.0	7.0
Capex (maintenance)	0	0	0	0	Pre-tax profit	(57.2)	47.9	34.4	8.7
Investments	0	0	0	0	Net profit	(63.6)	67.9	30.6	9.3
Proceeds from sale of assets	0	0	0	0	Net profit (adj.)	(20.7)	(4.5)	26.4	9.6
Others	(156,564)	(55,640)	(61,204)	(67,324)	EPS	(21.5)	(5.5)	25.2	8.0
Financing	(64,449)	47,096	49,363	54,299					
Dividend payments	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	Leverage				
Issue of shares	(11,056)	43,272	45,156	49,671	Debt to total capital	4.2	4.0	3.9	3.7
Proceeds from borrowings	1,332	3,824	4,207	4,628	Debt to equity	4.9	4.7	4.4	4.2
Loan repayment	0	0	0	0	Net debt/(cash) to equity	(14.9)	(21.8)	(27.9)	(33.7)
Others/interest paid	(54,725)	0	0	0	Interest cover (x)	5.3	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Net cash inflow (outflow)	(120,282)	97,441	114,840	135,534					
Beginning cash & cash equivalent	319,014	189,898	287,339	402,180					
Changes due to forex impact	(8,834)	0	0	0					
Ending cash & cash equivalent	189,898	287,339	402,180	537,713					

Notes

Wednesday, 09 November 2022



Wednesday, 09 November 2022

Disclosures/Disclaimers

This report is prepared by UOB Kay Hian Private Limited ("UOBKH"), which is a holder of a capital markets services licence and an exempt financial adviser in Singapore.

This report is provided for information only and is not an offer or a solicitation to deal in securities or to enter into any legal relations, nor an advice or a recommendation with respect to such securities.

This report is prepared for general circulation. It does not have regard to the specific investment objectives, financial situation and the particular needs of any recipient hereof. Advice should be sought from a financial adviser regarding the suitability of the investment product, taking into account the specific investment objectives, financial situation or particular needs of any person in receipt of the recommendation, before the person makes a commitment to purchase the investment product.

This report is confidential. This report may not be published, circulated, reproduced or distributed in whole or in part by any recipient of this report to any other person without the prior written consent of UOBKH. This report is not directed to or intended for distribution to or use by any person or any entity who is a citizen or resident of or located in any locality, state, country or any other jurisdiction as UOBKH may determine in its absolute discretion, where the distribution, publication, availability or use of this report would be contrary to applicable law or would subject UOBKH and its connected persons (as defined in the Financial Advisers Act, Chapter 110 of Singapore) to any registration, licensing or other requirements within such jurisdiction.

The information or views in the report ("Information") has been obtained or derived from sources believed by UOBKH to be reliable. However, UOBKH makes no representation as to the accuracy or completeness of such sources or the Information and UOBKH accepts no liability whatsoever for any loss or damage arising from the use of or reliance on the Information. UOBKH and its connected persons may have issued other reports expressing views different from the Information and all views expressed in all reports of UOBKH and its connected persons are subject to change without notice. UOBKH reserves the right to act upon or use the Information at any time, including before its publication herein.

Except as otherwise indicated below, (1) UOBKH, its connected persons and its officers, employees and representatives may, to the extent permitted by law, transact with, perform or provide broking, underwriting, corporate finance-related or other services for or solicit business from, the subject corporation(s) referred to in this report; (2) UOBKH, its connected persons and its officers, employees and representatives may also, to the extent permitted by law, transact with, perform or provide broking or other services for or solicit business from, other persons in respect of dealings in the securities referred to in this report or other investments related thereto; (3) the officers, employees and representatives of UOBKH may also serve on the board of directors or in trustee positions with the subject corporation(s) referred to in this report. (All of the foregoing is hereafter referred to as the "Subject Business"); and (4) UOBKH may otherwise have an interest (including a proprietary interest) in the subject corporation(s) referred to in this report.

As of the date of this report, no analyst responsible for any of the content in this report has any proprietary position or material interest in the securities of the corporation(s) which are referred to in the content they respectively author or are otherwise responsible for.

IMPORTANT DISCLOSURES FOR U.S. PERSONS

This research report was prepared by UOBKH, a company authorized, as noted above, to engage in securities activities in Singapore. UOBKH is not a registered broker-dealer in the United States and, therefore, is not subject to U.S. rules regarding the preparation of research reports and the independence of research analysts. This research report is provided for distribution by UOBKH (whether directly or through its US registered broker dealer affiliate named below) to "major U.S. institutional investors" in reliance on the exemption from registration provided by Rule 15a-6 of the U.S. Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"). All US persons that receive this document by way of distribution from or which they regard as being from UOBKH by their acceptance thereof represent and agree that they are a major institutional investor and understand the risks involved in executing transactions in securities.

Any U.S. recipient of this research report wishing to effect any transaction to buy or sell securities or related financial instruments based on the information provided in this research report should do so only through UOB Kay Hian (U.S.) Inc ("UOBKHUS"), a registered broker-dealer in the United States. Under no circumstances should any recipient of this research report effect any transaction to buy or sell securities or related financial instruments through UOBKH.

UOBKHUS accepts responsibility for the contents of this research report, subject to the terms set out below, to the extent that it is delivered to and intended to be received by a U.S. person other than a major U.S. institutional investor.

The analyst whose name appears in this research report is not registered or qualified as a research analyst with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority ("FINRA") and may not be an associated person of UOBKHUS and, therefore, may not be subject to applicable restrictions under FINRA Rules on communications with a subject company, public appearances and trading securities held by a research analyst account.



Wednesday, 09 November 2022

Analyst Certification/Regulation AC

Each research analyst of UOBKH who produced this report hereby certifies that (1) the views expressed in this report accurately reflect his/her personal views about all of the subject corporation(s) and securities in this report; (2) the report was produced independently by him/her; (3) he/she does not carry out, whether for himself/herself or on behalf of UOBKH or any other person, any of the Subject Business involving any of the subject corporation(s) or securities referred to in this report; and (4) he/she has not received and will not receive any compensation that is directly or indirectly related or linked to the recommendations or views expressed in this report or to any sales, trading, dealing or corporate finance advisory services or transaction in respect of the securities in this report. However, the compensation received by each such research analyst is based upon various factors, including UOBKH's total revenues, a portion of which are generated from UOBKH's business of dealing in securities.

Reports are distributed in the respective countries by the respective entities and are subject to the additional restrictions listed in the following table.

ollowing table	
General	This report is not intended for distribution, publication to or use by any person or entity who is a citizen or resident of or
	located in any country or jurisdiction where the distribution, publication or use of this report would be contrary to
	applicable law or regulation.
Hong Kong	This report is distributed in Hong Kong by UOB Kay Hian (Hong Kong) Limited ("UOBKHHK"), which is regulated by the
	Securities and Futures Commission of Hong Kong. Neither the analyst(s) preparing this report nor his associate, has
	trading and financial interest and relevant relationship specified under Para. 16.4 of Code of Conduct in the listed
	corporation covered in this report. UOBKHHK does not have financial interests and business relationship specified under
	Para. 16.5 of Code of Conduct with the listed corporation covered in this report. Where the report is distributed in Hong
	Kong and contains research analyses or reports from a foreign research house, please note:
	(i) recipients of the analyses or reports are to contact UOBKHHK (and not the relevant foreign research house) in Hong
	Kong in respect of any matters arising from, or in connection with, the analysis or report; and
	(ii) to the extent that the analyses or reports are delivered to and intended to be received by any person in Hong Kong
	who is not a professional investor, or institutional investor, UOBKHHK accepts legal responsibility for the contents of the
	analyses or reports only to the extent required by law.
Indonesia	This report is distributed in Indonesia by PT UOB Kay Hian Sekuritas, which is regulated by Financial Services Authority
	of Indonesia ("OJK"). Where the report is distributed in Indonesia and contains research analyses or reports from a
	foreign research house, please note recipients of the analyses or reports are to contact PT UOBKH (and not the relevant
	foreign research house) in Indonesia in respect of any matters arising from, or in connection with, the analysis or report.
Malaysia	Where the report is distributed in Malaysia and contains research analyses or reports from a foreign research house, the
	recipients of the analyses or reports are to contact UOBKHM (and not the relevant foreign research house) in Malaysia,
	at +603-21471988, in respect of any matters arising from, or in connection with, the analysis or report as UOBKHM is the
	registered person under CMSA to distribute any research analyses in Malaysia.
Singapore	This report is distributed in Singapore by UOB Kay Hian Private Limited ("UOBKH"), which is a holder of a capital
	markets services licence and an exempt financial adviser regulated by the Monetary Authority of Singapore. Where the
	report is distributed in Singapore and contains research analyses or reports from a foreign research house, please note:
	(i) recipients of the analyses or reports are to contact UOBKH (and not the relevant foreign research house) in Singapore
	in respect of any matters arising from, or in connection with, the analysis or report; and
	(ii) to the extent that the analyses or reports are delivered to and intended to be received by any person in Singapore
	who is not an accredited investor, expert investor or institutional investor, UOBKH accepts legal responsibility for the
Theiland	contents of the analyses or reports only to the extent required by law.
Thailand	This report is distributed in Thailand by UOB Kay Hian Securities (Thailand) Public Company Limited, which is regulated by the Securities and Evaluation of Thailand
United	by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Thailand.
	This report is being distributed in the UK by UOB Kay Hian (U.K.) Limited, which is an authorised person in the meaning
Kingdom	of the Financial Services and Markets Act and is regulated by The Financial Conduct Authority. Research distributed in
United	the UK is intended only for institutional clients.
United States of	This report cannot be distributed into the U.S. or to any U.S. person or entity except in compliance with applicable U.S.
States of	laws and regulations. It is being distributed in the U.S. by UOB Kay Hian (US) Inc, which accepts responsibility for its
America	contents. Any U.S. person or entity receiving this report and wishing to effect transactions in any securities referred to in
('U.S.')	the report should contact UOB Kay Hian (US) Inc. directly.

Copyright 2022, UOB Kay Hian Pte Ltd. All rights reserved.

http://research.uobkayhian.com

RCB Regn. No. 197000447W