I’ve come to Alibaba’s global headquarters, it’s about a one-hour train ride from Shanghai, let’s go inside and explore. There’s an unmanned vehicle coming right at me. Here at the Chinese tech giant’s campus in Hangzhou, China, I’m exploring Alibaba’s corporate culture to see first-hand how it’s embedding technology into just about everything you can imagine. There are a lot of vending machines here.

Alibaba is one of China’s tech success stories. In 2014, its listing on the New York Stock Exchange became the biggest Initial Public Offering in history. Today, it has a market capitalization of more than $400 billion and around 100,000 staff globally.

It’s about 12.30 in the afternoon so it’s the peak of lunch time. And Alibaba’s founder, Jack Ma, has become a known-figure around the world. Alibaba started as an e-commerce platform 20 years ago, but now it has more than 30 business units that span from fintech to film. It boasts six campuses around Hangzhou, with many more offices across China and around the world, including Silicon Valley. I’ve come to its main headquarters, called XiXi Campus, home to Alibaba’s corporate office, as well as its major e-commerce brands Tmall, Taobao, and AliExpress. 20,000 people work here. Next to the campus is a shopping mall, where Alibaba is piloting various retail technologies.

It even recently opened its own hotel, where it’s testing out robot butlers and facial recognition door access. To get into the main campus, employees have the option of using facial recognition. It’s really quite interesting how seamless this facial recognition technology is for employees, especially if you have your hands full, well it could definitely come in handy. All around campus, you have bikes like this that are available for employees to get around from point A to Point B. There are no locks, they’re just ready and available for use here on campus. I’m gonna take one for a ride.

Employees here on campus can order groceries on an app and then have it delivered to their building via this unmanned vehicle. This is all part of Alibaba’s plans to develop its artificial intelligence technologies, which will be rolled out in its self-driving cars. Last year, it announced unmanned vehicle trials, joining the likes of fellow Chinese conglomerates Baidu and Tencent.

Employee orientation here at Alibaba is a solid two weeks. During that two weeks, new hires will do different activities, different challenges and really get to know the company.

And for newbies who stay loyal to the company, a gift awaits. This wall behind me shows what employees get when they hit a certain mark for staying with the company. So, if you’ve been at Alibaba for one year, you get a pin. At three years, you get a pendant, and then at five years, you get a ring.

And now it’s time for lunch. You’ve got a lot of food options. You have dumplings, fried dumplings, casserole dishes, duck soup with noodles, Cantonese-style roasted meat, a lot of different styles of Chinese food and I do see an Italian station as well. The camera actually recognizes every dish that I picked, and then automatically assigns a price, gives me a total, and then you pay. Employees here get a set amount of money per week that they can use toward the cafeteria and that pretty much should cover lunch and dinner comfortably.

The cafeteria opens once again at 9pm for snacks. So, if you are working late, you’re covered, you’ve got yogurt, muffins, things like that. After lunch, I tour some of the areas where Alibaba’s e-commerce platforms are based. The company claims it has 674 million active annual users visiting its retail marketplaces in China. Alibaba’s total retail sales are expected to surpass $1 trillion this year. But while sales are growing, smaller retailers are chipping away at its market dominance.

In 2016, it made up nearly 70% of e-commerce space in China. This year, it’ll make up just over half.

Many places on campus have different timelines like this which are a homage to the history of different business units of Alibaba. Employees here have access to the gym where you see some Alibaba branding. You also see the T-Mall logo looking quite athletic. This is Alibaba’s giftshop where you have a lot of different mascots for every different business unit. Some of Alibaba’s businesses are famous for their mascots. There’s this cat for Tmall, this hippo for Freshippo, its new retail grocery store, and a pig for Fliggy, which is Alibaba’s online travel platform. I just arrived at the bookstore where you have a lot of books, a lot of leadership books, books about Jack Ma. It’s also a coffee shop as well. Jack Ma is a big fan of Chinese martial arts so all of the conference rooms here on campus are named after different places in books. Every May 10th, that’s 510 has become what’s known as Ali Day, and it’s now known as employee appreciation day. 102 couples are invited to come on Ali Day and celebrate their wedding and Jack Ma imparts knowledge and wisdom as part of this day. Now why, 102? Well, because Jack Ma once said that this company needs to last at least 102 years because that would mean it spanned three generations. I’m ending my tour at Alibaba’s museum. Inside the museum, you will see a history of the company and then you will also fast forward to today and learn about some of the new business units that have been created. Just outside of the Alibaba museum, you have this massive wall with many different icons, Alibaba says the wall is meant to recognize and salute game changers who have made a positive impact on the world. They are kind of subtle, kind of hidden, so I’m going to see if we can find who’s on here. I found Steve Jobs right here. Mark Zuckerberg. Sergey Brin and Larry Page, founders of Google, which is now called Alphabet. Warren Buffett. And perhaps unsurprisingly, I find Jack Ma.

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