



e-LinX

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NEWSLETTER

E-linx is the e-newsletter for The CardLinX Association. For more information or to subscribe go to www.cardlinx.org or email info@cardlinx.org.

ALIBABA PLANS TECH-DRIVEN WINTER OLYMPICS 2022

In This Issue

1. [Alibaba Plans Tech-Driven Winter Olympics 2022](#)
2. [Rakuten Partners with Walmart for Grocery Delivery in Japan](#)
3. [London Startup Brings Digital Loyalty and SKU-Level Offers to the UK](#)

Not only has CardLinX's membership expanded in Asia, the next three Olympics will be held in Asia: with the 2018 Winter Olympics underway in PyeongChang, South Korea, the 2020 Summer Olympics will be hosted by Tokyo and the 2022 Winter Olympics will be hosted in Beijing. Alibaba, the parent company to Chinese payments juggernaut Alipay, signed on to be an Olympics sponsor until 2028 and has over 200 representatives at the PyeongChang Games to identify areas for greater technology. Jack Ma, Alibaba CEO wants to make the



Beijing Winter Olympics more technologically advanced and we can expect payment innovations like their foray into biometric payments and cashier-less shopping to make an appearance in the Beijing Winter Games. An additional area of focus at future games will be capturing cross-border payments from outbound Chinese travelers and this was a priority area for both payment networks like Mastercard and startups like You World and Japan Foodie. [Learn more.](#)

Rakuten Partners with Walmart for Grocery Delivery in Japan



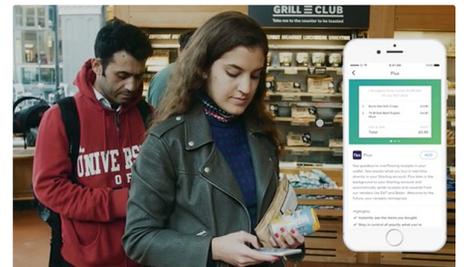
CardLinX member Rakuten is partnering with Walmart to offer a new online grocery service in Japan as well as sale of e-book readers, audiobooks and e-books in the US through Rakuten-owned Kobo. Kobo is the second-largest e-reader manufacturer worldwide. The service is expected to launch in the third quarter of 2018 and be called Rakuten Seiyu Netsuper. Seiyu GK is a Walmart subsidiary that has been operating since 2000. [Learn more.](#)

CardLinX Insight: As online commerce moves to a global marketplace, strategic partnerships like Rakuten's with Walmart will become even more common. This partnership shows continued interest to expand to overseas markets to maintain growth and market share. Rakuten is the largest e-commerce retailer in Japan and its growth and expansion are part its business plan says Rakuten CEO Hiroshi Mikitani at its latest earnings meeting.

London Startup Brings Digital Loyalty and SKU-Level Offers to the UK

Flux, a new London startup is working to solve two card-linking challenges at the same time: acquiring and presenting SKU-level offers to consumers and making loyalty points more accessible. UK-based Starling Bank uses the Flux platform to send real-time, itemized receipts to the Starling app when a customer pays with their Starling in return Starling users will receive automated loyalty points with cash-back for Flux-supported purchases, without the need for paper coupons. Flux is also working with Barclays Bank and Monzo to consolidate loyalty points across bank accounts. [Learn more.](#)

CardLinX Insights: With the looming implementation of the Open Banking regulation in the UK and PSD2 legislation in the European Union, companies are working on different ideas of how that can benefit consumers. Flux's business model is one iteration of how Open Banking could work: Flux requests SKU-level data from merchants and consumers, provides a platform through its app to aggregate digital loyalty points and presents offers to consumers through the same app. The key to card-linking has always been scale and the speed at which consumers adopt new financial innovations may depend on the strength of its partnerships.



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