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# Walmart Plans More Stores and E-Commerce in China

By REUTERS

BEIJING — Walmart, the world's biggest retailer, is expanding its business in China as it seeks to raise profitability in a slowing retail sector.

At a news conference here on Thursday, the company announced plans to open as many as 110 facilities in China from 2014 to 2016, in addition to the 30 it opened this year.

Walmart has closed 11 stores in the country and is looking to shutter 15 to 30 more in the next 18 months, said Greg Foran, chief executive of Walmart China.

The company is tackling a fundamental change in China's retail sector, with annual sales growth slowing and consumers moving toward shopping online.

Walmart wants to profit from China's changing retail landscape by embracing e-commerce, which is expected to record 32 percent annual growth in the country between 2012 and 2015.

"Customers are using technology more, and especially here in China," said Michael T. Duke, Walmart's chief executive. "We love customers to understand price and the safety of the product they're purchasing. E-commerce is a great enabler, allowing Walmart to grow globally."

Mr. Duke said that Walmart's e-commerce business grew about 30 percent in the first half of the year and that the company was aligned with China's strategy of promoting an emerging middle class and urbanization.

Walmart said last week that it was closing 50 unprofitable stores in Brazil and China. Its international sales declined 2.9 percent in the three months ended July 31.

Last year, Walmart bought control of Yihaodian, its Chinese online store, which claims 24 million registered users and provides same-day delivery.

Walmart currently operates more than 400 retail superstores, Sam's Club stores and distribution centers in more than 160 cities throughout China.