

Groupon distancing itself from rivals: CEO

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"There's no doubt the barriers to entry are very low" in the online coupon space, Mason told [financial analysts](#) at a technology conference sponsored by [Credit Suisse](#) in Arizona which was streamed over the Internet.

"We've had literally thousands of Groupon competitors launched around the world," Mason said. "But the data shows with equal certainty that the barriers to success are very high."

The competitive landscape saw an "inflection point" in the third quarter of the year, he said.

"The largest competitors have either dropped out of the space altogether, reduced their participation in the space or had flat growth or negative growth," Mason said.

"We feel like we've reached this point where our greatest competition is ourselves," he said. "That's what the data says."

Mason said Groupon has "10,000 people around the globe who are talking to tens of thousands of merchants every single day.

"Our scale, our brand, our customer service and our merchant service, and increasingly the technology that we're developing, is the core of what allows us to break away from the pack of competitors," Mason said.

Mason's remarks were his most extensive comments since Groupon emerged from the "quiet period" mandated by its [initial public offering](#).

Groupon raised \$700 million in the biggest [IPO](#) by an [Internet company](#) since [Google](#), which reaped \$1.7 billion when it went public in August 2004.

Groupon shares were listed on the [Nasdaq](#) at \$20 on November 4 and climbed as high as \$31.14 on the first day of trading.

They slipped below the list price last week, however, but gained 9.31 percent on Wednesday to close at \$17.50.

Groupon, which rejected a \$6 billion [takeover](#) offer from Google a year ago, has enjoyed phenomenal growth since its founding in 2008 but has

been dogged by questions about its business model and accounting methods.

Groupon, which is present in 175 North American markets and 45 countries, reported a net loss of \$308.1 million for the first nine months of this year compared to a loss of \$77.7 million during the same quarter last year.

Revenue soared to \$1.1 billion in the same period from \$140.7 million a year ago.

Internet giant Google and LivingSocial are among the firms offering online discounts similar to those proposed by Groupon.

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