

Holiday Wrap

2013/14

A WRAP-UP OF THE
BEST (AND WORST) OF
HOLIDAY RETAIL FROM
AROUND THE WORLD



It is not possible to include everything in the summary 'Holiday Wrap' report but to make sure you have access to all the source material we were able to collate, here is the country-specific material for the USA.

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105 Days 'til Christmas: Kmart Airs First Holiday Ad

Commercial Promoting Layaway Marks Earliest Ever Kickoff to Holiday Marketing

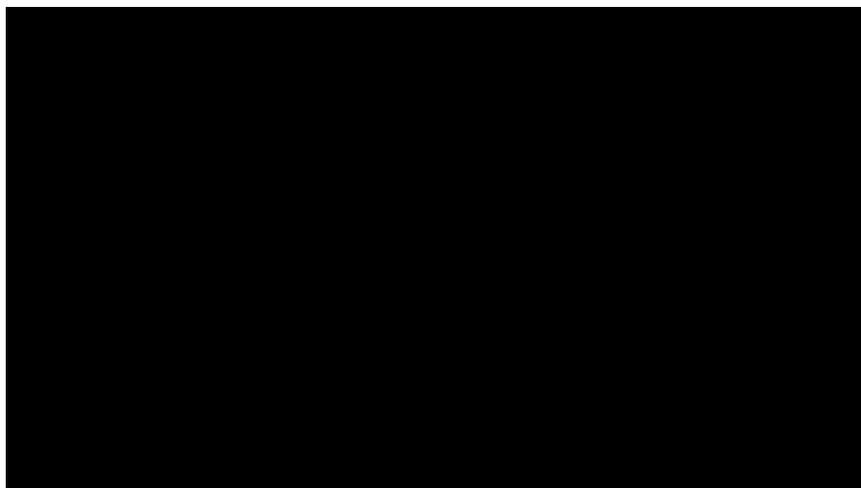
By: *Natalie Zmuda* Published: *September 10, 2013*

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Mark your calendars, the holiday season is officially under way.

In an unprecedented move, Kmart has aired its first holiday ad. The commercial, which promotes the retailer's layaway program, features a gingerbread man sneaking up on a woman working in an office cubicle. A voiceover says: "Don't let the holidays sneak up on you. Shop early with Kmart free layaway. ... Kmart. Get in, get more Christmas."



The ad aired multiple times throughout the day Monday. The ad was even spotted on the East Coast, where Sept. 9 marked the first day of school for many children. Almost immediately consumers took to Kmart's Facebook page to complain about the early arrival of a Christmas ad. The brand has been thanking people for their feedback and noting, "We're just really excited for the holidays and layaway!" Last year, Kmart's first holiday ad aired on Oct. 28, according to [Ace Metrix](#) ☼.

Kmart's popular layway program is offering no service fees for new layaway purchases online or in store between Sept. 8 and Nov. 23.

A Kmart spokeswoman noted that the ad is being "tweaked," though she declined to comment further, adding that Kmart is not ready to start talking about its holiday plan and strategy just yet.

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Jonathan Symonds, exec VP-marketing at Ace Metrix, pointed out that it's necessary for layaway ads to come early in the process, though it's still "eye opening" that Kmart is out of the gate six to eight weeks earlier than is typical.

"There might not be creative to respond with in the pipeline," Mr. Symonds said. "It will, by definition, create a slightly earlier cycle. As opposed to right before Halloween, it will have the impact of pulling the season up by a few weeks. But it won't start the race today."

In years past, it's not been unusual for retailers to begin digital promotions or social media efforts well in advance of the holidays. But TV ads have typically been kept under wraps until late October. One notable exception: A year ago Target aired its first holiday ad on Oct. 7, more than three weeks before Halloween. That spot featured an upbeat tune with the cheery chorus "Are You Ready?" and an oversized version of Target mascot Bullseye trotting through snow-covered streets with a shopping bag in his mouth.

"This might give new meaning to the phrase Christmas Creep," said Kathy Grannis, a spokeswoman for the National Retail Federation, of Kmart's ad. "It's anybody's game right now, wheels are definitely in motion for a very promotional holiday season."

Ms. Grannis said that when it comes to holiday messaging, a TV spot about layaway will certainly resonate with budget-conscious consumers. Already many retailers have expressed caution about the second half of the year.

"We're in an either-or economy. Many households are spending on big ticket items, investing in houses, home furnishings or cars," explained Ms. Grannis. "At the same time, discretionary spending in June and into July was much softer than anyone expected."

According to the NRF, 12% of consumers begin their holiday shopping before September, 6% get started in September and 20% start in October. The winter holidays account for nearly \$580 billion in sales.

"There are limited budgets today, and retailers are aware of that," Ms. Grannis said. "Consumers are spending wisely, so reminding them about layaway is smart. It's not just about saying we've got great specials. It's about helping them with their holiday budgets."

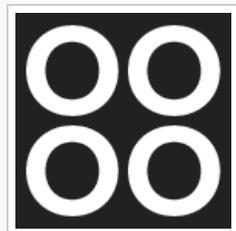
DraftFCB handles creative for Kmart, having retained the business after a lengthy review. The shop has been responsible for Kmart's popular "Ship My Pants," "Big Gas Savings" and "Yo Mama" ads.

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Anxious Retailers Open 'Round the Clock to Capture Last-Minute Holiday Sales

Posted by [Barry Silverstein](#) on December 18, 2013 01:56 PM

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In the marathon called the holiday shopping season, retailers are pulling out all the stops in the final lap.

Already under fire for preempting Black Friday by [opening their doors](#) on Thanksgiving, some retailers are now staying open every day, all day and all night, until Christmas. Kohl's, for example, will open at 6 a.m. on Friday, December 20 and operate until 6 p.m. on Christmas eve —111 hours straight of being available to holiday shoppers. Toys R Us will follow a similar pattern, opening at 6 a.m. on Saturday, December 21 and remaining open until 9 p.m. on December 24. The toy chain's Times Square location in New York City has already been open for 24 hours since December 1.

One reason for this madness: The holiday shopping season is protracted, thanks to Thanksgiving being late this year. "There's no question that the shortened holiday season has put both retailers and consumers in a rush to make the most out of the time that's left before the big day," Matthew Shay, president and CEO of the National Retail Federation, [told](#) The Huffington Post. According to the Federation, as of December 9, half of consumers still have their holiday shopping left to do, while a Consumer Reports [poll](#) indicated that nearly a third of American shoppers had yet to buy their holiday gifts.

30 percent of shoppers said they would go to mass market retailers like Target and Walmart, and another third said they were shopping online, according to Consumer Reports. "Online is going to be the darling of the holiday shopping season," Marshal Cohen, NPD Groups' chief retail industry analyst, [told USA Today](#). "It may grow a little more than the 20 percent that was expected before the season began. The consumer is spending more time online trying to find deals."

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"Deals" seems to be the watchword of the season. Starting with the traditional [marketing blitz](#) on Black Friday, retailers are already deep discounting and running special holiday promotions. "This is the week retailers could lose confidence in sales projections and hit the 'panic button' by offering deeper-than-planned promos," [said](#) Kimberly Greenberger, a Morgan Stanley analyst. "There are a lot of nervous retailers right now," [added](#) Bill Martin, founder of the data firm ShopperTrak. "It's a finger-crossed situation."

ShopperTrak reported a 5.4 percent drop in sales and a 26 percent decline in foot traffic at malls and other retail venues last Saturday as compared to the same time last year. Bad weekend weather was thought to be a contributing factor.

In the UK, at least, there was a reason for retail holiday cheer. The Confederation of British Industry reported that, after two weak months, retail sales had rebounded in December. "Customers have clearly held off spending through the autumn and we're only now seeing them start to hit the stores," Barry Williams, chairman of the CBI and a senior executive at the Asda supermarket chain, [told](#) Reuters.

It remains to be seen if US retailers will find coal in their stockings on Christmas morning.

More about: [Retail](#), [Kohl's](#), [Toys R Us](#), [Target](#), [Walmart](#), [Best Buy](#), [Christmas](#), [Holiday Season](#), [Holiday Shopping](#), [Black Friday](#), [Thanksgiving](#), [Promotions](#), [Advertising](#), [Marketing](#), [National Retail Federation](#), [Confederation of British Industry](#)

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Apple Stores to celebrate holidays with magical front window display

CATEGORY: [AAPL COMPANY](#)



Written by: [9TO5MAC](#)

November 18, 2013 / 9:07 am

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For this upcoming holiday season, Apple will be celebrating with a front Apple Store window display that several Apple Retail employees have described as spectacular. A photo of the display, sent in by a source, is above. The display highlights both the iPad Air and iPhone 5c and is made up of several LED lights shaped into snow flakes. The design is simple, but unique and impressive...

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The displays will begin going up in many countries across the world later this week, and they will remain up until early January. News of the new front window display was shared at Apple's quarterly meetings this past weekend. Also at this meeting, employees were *surprised* about [this year's holiday gift](#): \$10 off of a \$50 iTunes card (one card per employee).

A few more images of the window display from Apple's Fashion Show Las Vegas store (Thanks Zach):





@9to5mac They currently have this up in the Fashion Show mall in Las Vegas which reopened Saturday. Mesmerized my son for 15 minutes.

—
Brian Stucki (@brianstucki) November 18, 2013

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Apple reportedly acquires SnappyLabs, the company behind the rapid-fire iOS camera app



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Best Buy Takes a Black Friday Gamble with #VineinLine Promo

Posted by [Sheila Shayon](#) on November 27, 2013 11:14 AM

#BlackFriday is almost here! When you get in line, send us a Vine. Use [#VineInLine](#) and we'll RT the best. <https://t.co/Cy35yLzODg>

— Best Buy (@BestBuy) [November 25, 2013](#)

Best Buy, no stranger to Black Friday-related madness, is prompting camped-out shoppers to create Vine videos using hashtag #VineinLine in an invitation issued through Twitter ads.

To prepare for the pandemonium, a Best Buy store in Denver, Co. held a dress rehearsal. Store manager Doug Ryan told his team, "Black Friday, in my opinion, is the funnest day at Best Buy," according to the *Denver Post*. "The energy of the customers coming into the store, the fact they are choosing us—it's a special atmosphere." That is, until someone gets trampled.

After his intro, employees broke into departments for detailed briefings on door-buster deals, pricing, inventories and how to pitch extended-warranty protection and store credit cards. Department manager Kevin Ribbens described the training as "bum rushing' individual departments with dozens of workers playing frantic customers posing endless questions—sometimes with an element of impatience."

Last year Best Buy opened stores at midnight for Black Friday, but this year, like so many other retailers out to grab any edge they can, its stores will open Thanksgiving evening.

A [poll](#) released Monday by the University of Connecticut showed that nine of every 10 respondents said they don't plan to spend the holiday shopping for bargains. In addition, 34 percent of Americans say they view stores that open on Thanksgiving negatively, 20 percent say it makes them less likely to shop there, and 74 percent say a Thanksgiving opening makes no difference in their decision about where to shop.

And for those that do show up after gobbling up their turkey dinners, Best Buy will be ready. "I can tell you that Best Buy has a well-established and tested process to ensure customers have a smooth and safe Black Friday shopping experience," said Best Buy spokeswoman Amy von Walter. "We have a formal ticketing and line process, which begins about two hours before the door busters and allows for an orderly and smooth entrance into the store for our customers."

Using social media for crowd control is a creative gamble—and a potential PR nightmare that we'll have to wait until Thanksgiving to see.

More about: [Social Media](#), [Retail](#), [Best Buy](#), [Vine](#), [Twitter](#), [Hashtag](#), [Black Friday](#), [Thanksgiving](#), [Holiday Season](#), [Holiday Shopping](#), [Holiday Ads](#), [Advertising](#), [Marketing](#)

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Big-box retailers play match game with prices



Stores' goodwill gesture can be a hassle for shoppers.

Article by: JOHN EWOLDT , Star Tribune

Updated: December 11, 2013 - 9:17 AM

Retailers may have tightened their belts on returns, but they're loosening up their price-match policies this holiday season.

Nearly all big-box retailers now offer some form of price matching, whether it's equaling a competitor or offering a price guarantee when a regular-priced item goes on sale. The policies at Target, Best Buy and other companies are evolving in favor of the consumer, said Lindsay Sakraida, features director at Dealnews.com.

"Stores are either matching Amazon during the holidays or in the case of Target and Best Buy, year-round," she said.

Price-match policies aren't new. They've waxed and waned for longer than a decade, but retailers such as Target and Wal-Mart began offering them again in 2009 during the recession. Earlier this year, Wal-Mart heavily promoted its price-match policy, even saying that consumers don't need to show proof of a lower price.

Analysts say that retailers use the matches as a goodwill gesture for consumers and an attempt to appear competitive. Last year Best Buy added price matching to combat showrooming, in which shoppers check out an item in the store but then buy online.

This year, Staples and Toys 'R' Us added Amazon to the list of retailers they match online. The office-supply company matched Amazon's prices on its website in the past, but this is the first year it matched Amazon's prices in its stores, too. They will also match any online competitor with a brick-and-mortar store by the same name.

Some retailers are extending the time that they will match prices after a purchase. Throughout the year, most offer a price guarantee for seven to 15 days if the item is priced less in their own store or on their website.

But retailers such as Target and Best Buy have ratcheted up the price-match period from early November until a few days before Christmas. The improved holiday policy also includes matching competitors.

For example, if a customer purchased a TV for \$300 on Nov. 5 and the identical item could be found on Amazon for \$250 on Dec. 15, she could get a \$50 credit as long as she brings in proof of the current price and Target or Best Buy verifies it.

In theory this means that customers can shop with confidence at a retailer offering a price-match policy because they are guaranteed the lowest price. It allows customers to be able to look beyond the price to other factors, such as product assortment, advice, convenience and service, Best Buy spokesman Jeff Shelman said.

But the reality is that only about 5 percent of consumers take advantage of it, according to Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst at the NPD Group.

“Most people think of it as a waste of time,” added Edgar Dworsky, founder of ConsumerWorld.org. “It’s just for inveterate bargain hunters.”

Lesley Zaun of Minneapolis has never asked for a price match and has no plans to start this season. “It’s not going to happen for me,” she said. “It’s too much trouble.”

Even some dedicated shoppers agree. Mike Rydeen of St. Peter, Minn., used to save \$5 or \$10 on formula and diapers using price matches when his kids were little, but no longer. “The hassle of the parking lots and crowds isn’t worth it anymore,” he said.

Not just that. It’s also the long list of exceptions to the rule. Target has 27 bulleted exclusions on its website for holiday price match, including competitor coupon offers, bundled offers, contract cellphones and out-of-stock items.

Part of that may be due to overzealous frugal types trying to take advantage of retailers.

Consumerist.com, an advocacy website of Consumer Reports, had a shopper complain on its site that Toys ‘R’ Us matched Wal-Mart’s sale price of \$37 on a \$75 Skylanders SWAP Force video game, but it would not honor additional promotions such as an additional 10 percent off if he paid with a Toys ‘R’ Us credit card and 40 percent off if he purchased a second video game. Toys ‘R’ Us told the shopper that he could not combine offers.

Even if only a few hard-core savers are using price-match policies, it’s possible that they will be expanded further, Dworsky said. “Retailers can look like the good guy, and it’s no skin off their nose,” he said.

For a comparison of big-box retailers’ price match policies, check Consumerworld.org or Cheapism.com.

John Ewoldt • 612-673-7633

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Dear Target Guests,

As you have probably heard, Target learned in mid-December that criminals forced their way into our systems, gaining access to guest credit and debit card information. As a part of the ongoing forensic investigation, it was determined last week that certain guest information, including names, mailing addresses, phone numbers or email addresses, was also taken.

Our top priority is taking care of you and helping you feel confident about shopping at Target, and it is our responsibility to protect your information when you shop with us.

We didn't live up to that responsibility, and I am truly sorry.

Please know we moved as swiftly as we could to address the problem once it became known, and that we are actively taking steps to respond to your concerns and guard against something like this happening again. Specifically, we have:

1. Closed the access point that the criminals used and removed the malware they left behind.
2. Hired a team of data security experts to investigate how this happened. That effort is ongoing and we are working closely with law enforcement.
3. Communicated that our guests will have zero liability for any fraudulent charges arising from the breach.
4. Offered one year of free credit monitoring and identity theft protection to all Target guests so you can have peace of mind.

In the days ahead, Target will announce a coalition to help educate the public on the dangers of consumer scams. We will also accelerate the conversation—among customers, retailers, the financial community, regulators and others—on adopting newer, more secure technologies that protect consumers.

I know this breach has had a real impact on you, creating a great deal of confusion and frustration. I share those feelings. You expect more from us and deserve better.

We want to earn back your trust and confidence and ensure that we deliver the Target experience you know and love.

We are determined to make things right, and we will.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gregg Steinhafel".

Gregg Steinhafel, chairman, president and chief executive officer, Target

From: Leah Picardi
 To: holidayw@target.com
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Hi,

Target is offering (sometimes large) gift cards on select items online for 2 days only. It's interesting that they are doing this instead of deep discounts. Gift cards keep the money within Target.

http://www.target.com/c/2-day-sale-ways-to-shop/-/N-55iaq#?Ink=Other_120813_HP_E1|E1|Template_Home5|C&intc=1502318|null

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Offer available online only. Offers valid 12/13/13-12/14/13 at 11:59 PM PST.

Target Gift Card with Purchase of Select Items

Free Target gift card with purchase of select items. Not valid on previous orders. On your order summary, the item subtotal will reflect the price of the qualifying item plus the amount of the free gift card, followed by a discount given for the amount of the free gift card. Your price on the order summary will be the price of the qualifying item (the total charges for the qualifying item and gift card). Your account will actually be charged the amount of the qualifying item reduced by the amount of the gift card, and a separate charge for the amount of the gift card. The gift card will be sent to the same address as your order and will ship separately. If you want to return the item you purchased to a Target Store, you may either keep the gift card and just return the qualifying item (you will be refunded the amount of the qualifying item reduced by the amount of the gift card), or you can return the qualifying item and the gift card for a full refund using the online receipt. If you return the item you purchased by mail, keep the gift card; you will be refunded the amount of the qualifying item reduced by the amount of the gift card. Offer expires 12/14/13 at 11:59pm PST.

Spend \$40 on Kids' Sleepwear and Receive a \$10 Target Gift Card

Receive a \$10 gift card with purchase of \$40 in select Kids' Sleepwear. Offer available online only. Not valid on previous orders. Offer excludes Clearance items. On your order summary, the item subtotal will reflect the price of the qualifying item plus the amount of the free gift card, followed by a discount given for the amount of the free gift card. Your price on the order summary will be the price of the qualifying item (the total charges for the qualifying item and gift card). Your account will actually be charged the amount of the qualifying item reduced by the amount of the gift card, and a separate charge for the amount of the gift card. The gift card will be sent to the same address as your order and will ship separately. If you want to return the item you purchased to a Target Store, you may either keep the gift card and just return the qualifying item (you will be refunded the amount of the qualifying item reduced by the amount of the gift card), or you can return the qualifying item and the gift card for a full refund using the online receipt. If you return the item you purchased by mail, keep the gift card; you will be refunded the amount of the qualifying item reduced by the amount of the gift card. Offer expires 12/14/13 at 11:59pm PST.

Spend \$40 on Dresses and Receive a \$10 Target Gift Card

Receive a \$10 gift card with purchase of \$40 in select Dresses. Offer available online only. Not valid on previous orders. Offer excludes Clearance items. On your order summary, the item subtotal will reflect the price of the qualifying item plus the amount of the free gift card, followed by a discount given for the amount of the free gift card. Your price on the order summary will be the price of the qualifying item (the total charges for the qualifying item and gift card). Your account will actually be charged the amount of the qualifying item reduced by the amount of the gift card, and a separate charge for the amount of the gift card. The gift card will be sent to the same address as your order and will ship separately. If you want to return the item you purchased to a Target Store, you may either keep the gift card and just return the qualifying item (you will be refunded the amount of the qualifying item reduced by the amount of the gift card), or you can return the qualifying item and the gift card for a full refund using the online receipt. If you return the item you purchased by mail, keep the gift card; you will be refunded the amount of the qualifying item reduced by the amount of the gift card. Offer expires 12/14/13 at 11:59pm PST.

Free Shipping offer

Free shipping offers are valid for free standard and To the Door shipping only to the 48 contiguous United States, as well as APO/FPO. Not valid on previous orders. Offer expires 12/14/13 at 11:59 PM PST.

Leah Picardi | Millward Brown Digital | Sr. Associate, Retail and CPG
501 Boylston Street - 6th Floor | Boston, MA 02116 | o: 617-933-5704 f: 617-933-5700



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Target Gets a Strong and Early Start to Holiday 2013

03 Dec 2013 / By: Amy Koo

"Pay Less" Emphasis

The cheap-chic retailer emphasized its commitment to savings and value this holiday season, learning its lesson from last year's limited holiday bump in an aggressively discounted season. While Target had originally intended to protect margins by limiting deep discounts, the continuation of a challenging economic environment led Target to double-down on emphasizing low prices. Target's commercials showed prices for the first time in many years, and all ads encouraged guests to shop at Target.com for even more savings. Special Cartwheel digital coupons gave guests even more opportunities to layer savings, on top of sales and REDcard savings.

Locking In Holiday Spending Early

Like many other retailers, much of Target's strategy focused on locking in holiday spending as early as possible. Alongside its traditional pre-Black Friday seasonal and toy catalog offerings, REDcard guests were granted early access to Black-Friday deals before Thanksgiving, to reward their loyalty. As of Thanksgiving Day, all guests could shop Target.com for doorbusters, with several items selling out before noon. This resulted in one of the highest ever traffic days for Target.com.

Strong Turnout While Asking for Another Trip Later

With store openings moved up to 8 pm on Thanksgiving Day in most areas, Target stores also took advantage of guests' willingness to shop after Thanksgiving dinner. Guests who spent more than USD 75 received a 20% off coupon for a return visit during the first week of December. Target noted that traffic remained strong for several hours at many stores and across its many channels. Canadian guests, used to traveling down to the U.S. to take advantage of savings, were also granted access to their first ever Black Friday Target experience in Canada. The seasonal deep discounts also gave the retailer another chance to woo Canadians who were not charmed by its store opening snafus.

KR Prediction for Target's 2013 Holiday Season

Target should certainly feel buoyed by the strong showing for the Black Friday - Cyber Week period, and will likely reap long-term benefits from training guests to shop Target.com. However, it remains to be seen whether Target can keep the momentum going, or only be pulling the same sales to an earlier period. Target's aggressive discounting and low price focus will drive higher overall sales volume, but its low inventory position may not enable the retailer to keep up the pace should demand remain strong over December. Regardless, the heavy discounting will definitely subdue Target's gross margins for the fourth quarter. And until its online operations are on par with that of Amazon, Target.com won't be able to capture the truly last minute (and desperately willing to spend!) online orders that should be providing a nice cap for the holiday season.

Martin, Laura-AUS

From: Bird, Jon
Sent: Thursday, 5 December 2013 6:54 AM
To: Martin, Laura-AUS
Subject: For holiday wrap

From: Uber Los Angeles <supportla@uber.com>
Reply-To: Uber Los Angeles <supportla@uber.com>
Date: Thursday, December 5, 2013 4:21 AM
To: Jon Bird <Jon.Bird@ideaworks.com.au>
Subject: Uber Trees On-Demand, Tomorrow Only!



UBER LOS ANGELES

Hey Jon,

Uber kept you cool this summer with ice cream on-demand, and now we're sprinkling the holiday season with a little bit of magic. So pour yourself another glass of eggnog, **Los Angeles**, put your feet up by the fire, and watch your app while Uber does the heavy lifting.

UBER IS DELIVERING TREES ON-DEMAND TOMORROW, DECEMBER 5th!

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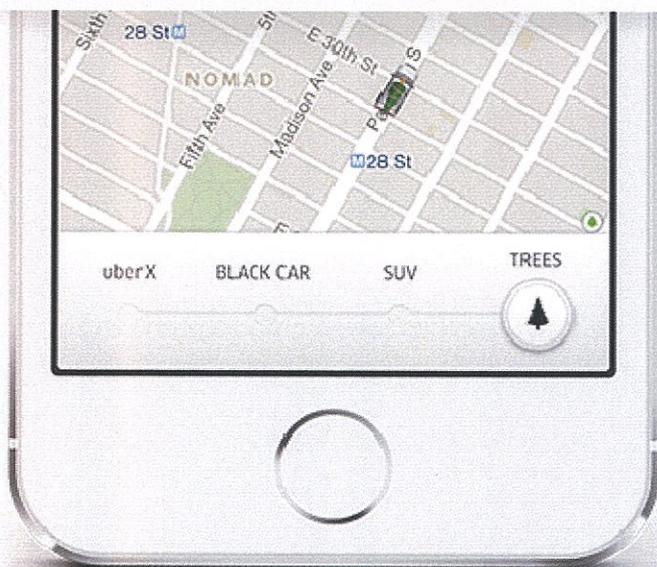
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HOW IT WORKS

- Between 11am - 8pm **TOMORROW**, request an "UberTREE" on the Uber [iPhone](#) or [Android](#) app. Time it right, and a tree will be delivered to your front door within minutes.

- **UberTREE Cost** = \$135. Order includes a 7-8 FT netted tree, tree stand, Uber gift, and delivery costs. (these trees are for keeps, so no refunds)
- Trees will be delivered to the first point of entry at your **request** location.
- No cash required! Your UberTREE will be charged directly to your Uber account.
- Demand will be **very high**. Check back often if your first request is unsuccessful.

Special Delivery Details

Note that all trees will be between 7-8 ft. Head over to our [blog](#) for details on the specific tree available in your city.

The Season to Share

Looking to spruce up your office or decorate your dorm room? Use the [fare split](#) feature to make this offer even sweeter.



Keep up with our [#UberTREE](#) deliveries across the country by following us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)—and be sure to share your photos!

Happy Holidays,
Team Uber Los Angeles

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Shoppers say ho-hum to discounts

Deals losing their appeal

Hadley Malcolm

@hadleypdxdc
USA TODAY

Holiday shopping has customers falling ill — from discount fatigue. Bombarded with daily e-mails from retailers and bored by blanket offers of 40% off, shoppers are tuning out.

"I delete so many e-mails," says Diana Taft, 49, of Ellington, Conn. "Unless it's something specific that I'm looking for, I don't even read it. It just becomes noise."

J. Crew has a standing offer of 30% off everything in stores and online. This week Walmart kicked off another round of online deals under the name "Gold Monday." Cyber Monday, Dec. 2, turned into Cyber Week as retailers extended discounts. And retailers including Toys R Us and Macy's are planning more deep discounts and around-the-clock store hours to lure shoppers in the final days before Christmas.

Never has the discount, and its power to spur purchases or cause customers to wait for something better, been more on display than this holiday season, retailing experts say. But as merchants try to outdo each other to drive traffic and sales, they've turned the deal from exciting to expected.

"The deal is not so special anymore," says Alison Jatlow Levy, a retail strategist at consulting firm Kurt Salmon. "The deal has become the norm. And if the deal is the norm ... it actually just trains the consumer to never buy at full price."

That can come at a cost to retailers, who often have to sacrifice their margins and profitability to be competitive on price.

Best Buy said last month that offering promotions in line with other retailers for the holidays would cut into the company's profits.

As retailers succumb to a near-constant state of discounting, customers have become numb to those discounts. What once was a steal now

Survey shows shoppers are feeling conflicted

Despite shoppers saying they're exhausted by constant discounting, they don't want to give up deals, and most people continue to opt into e-mail offers.

Even if you are mostly, or completely, done with your holiday shopping, would deeper discounts between now and Christmas encourage you to buy more?

Yes	69%
No	6%
Maybe	24%

Have you used a coupon offer to purchase a holiday gift this year?

Yes	73%
No	27%

If yes, how did you get that offer coupon?

E-mail	59%
Print ad	24%
Mail	8%
TV ad	2%
Other	7%

How much do "deadline offers" (e.g. 20% until midnight tonight) influence your purchase decisions?

Very much	21%
Somewhat	45%
I am indifferent	16%
Not really	12%
Not at all	6%

Do you find these types of "deadline offers" to be:

Helpful	33%
Stressful	22%
Annoying	14%
All of the above	22%
None of the above	10%

SOURCE: USAMP

doesn't even faze shoppers, says Brad Wilson, founder of BradsDeals.com.

"It takes such a large discount to even get our attention now," he says.

DISCOUNT E-MAILS DELETED

Taft pays attention to a discount e-mail only if it offers a promo code. If she receives an e-mail offering 30% off only to find that the website and store are advertising the same sale for everyone, she's turned off.

"Payless will text you a code that only you get," she says. "I'm more likely to look and shop and act now than if it's one of those blanket deals,



Shoppers waded through boxes of half-price socks Nov. 29 in Portland, Ore. Retailers have been rolling out one sale after another to vie for customers during this shorter holiday shopping season. PHOTOS BY BETH NAKAMURA, THE OREGONIAN, VIA



Nick Cheung and his mother, Yau Cheung, wait for relatives to finish shopping Nov. 29 at the Lloyd Center Mall in Portland, Ore.

because I know it's basically just for me," she says.

Shoppers say they ignore or delete e-mails from retailers because they get too many and the content rarely catches their attention. Nancy Leary of Bonita Springs, Fla., says the continuous discounting makes her wonder whether she's truly getting a bargain on what she buys. Kevin Merrill, 33, says he and his wife joke about how the J. Crew Outlet will phrase its next promotional e-mail.

"Since Black Friday, they have had a different way of offering the same deal," says Merrill, an advertising

project manager in Miami. "First offer was 50% off the entire site. Then it was 20% off already reduced prices. This went on over and over. We are waiting for an e-mail of empty shelves that says, 'We sold it all. Thanks.'"

At a certain point, shoppers say it's too tiring trying to make sure you got the best possible price on an item.

"I'd rather not see that something I purchased last week is yet again reduced further," says Cheryl Willis, 66, in LaVale, Md. "I don't have the time or patience to return my items and stand in line to get a refund."

RETAILERS TAKE RISKS

Despite discount fatigue setting in that doesn't mean we want to give up deals, Jatlow Levy says. We've just become savvier at knowing when to pounce, while retailers work harder to get our attention. But even those that pester us with discount notices aren't completely turning us off.

At the right moment and the right price, we'll buy, says Marshal Coher chief retail analyst at The NPI Group. "If you offer a good deal, the customer will come," he adds.

The consequence of all this discounting, though, could be a significant hit to retailers' profits. Confusing deals or deals that aren't competitive can lead to a decline in store traffic, says Will Weidman, senior vice president at Applied Predictive Technologies, a firm that helps retailers test sales strategies. He calls the shift in loyalty to price over brands "dangerous."

"If we become a price-focused retail community, then profit is going to be much more difficult to achieve," Cohen says. "As soon as profit goes out the window, there go jobs, there goes more merchandise, there goes the whole economic base again. We need retail to continue to thrive."



Deseret News National

Walmart, Kmart 'Layaway Angels' spreading hope, Christmas miracles

By [Emmilie Buchanan-Whitlock](#), Deseret News National Edition
Published: Thursday, Dec. 12 2013 4:00 a.m. MST
Updated: Friday, Dec. 13 2013 8:45 a.m. MST

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Kevin, center, Jolie, right, and Alex Lewis shop for a family they adopted for Christmas, Thursday Dec 15, 2011 at a Kmart in Omaha, Neb. The Lewises had their layaway paid off at Kmart by an unknown good Samaritan. 'Layaway

Dave Weaver, Associated Press

[Enlarge photo](#)

Summary

'Layaway angels' are anonymously footing the remaining bill for layaway items at Walmart and Kmart stores across the nation.

NATIONAL EDITION

This story is part of the Deseret News National Edition, which focuses on the issues that resonate with American families.

For many Walmart employees this holiday season, it's not uncommon to see angels.

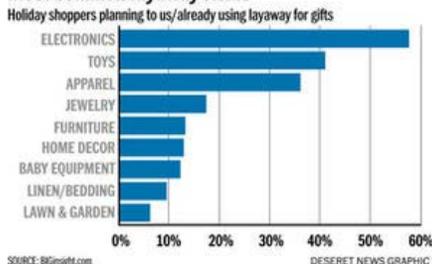
Mitchell Ruff, a Walmart store manager in Hendersonville, N.C., will admit that economic times are tough. But for Ruff, it's the hard times that show the true quality of humanity — especially at Christmas.

All around the country this giving season, many families in need are getting a dose of Christmas charity as anonymous strangers — dubbed as angels in the retail industry — are paying off their layaway bills.

Though accounts of the first layaway angel or secret Santa differ, the stories share many similarities. An anonymous shopper picks up the bill for a family who has set up a payment plan for holiday gifts, most commonly toys and electronics.

The Layaway Angels program, which has picked up notoriety for anonymous donations since 2011, is used by major corporations such as Walmart, Kmart and

Most common layaway items



“The word kind of travels in the

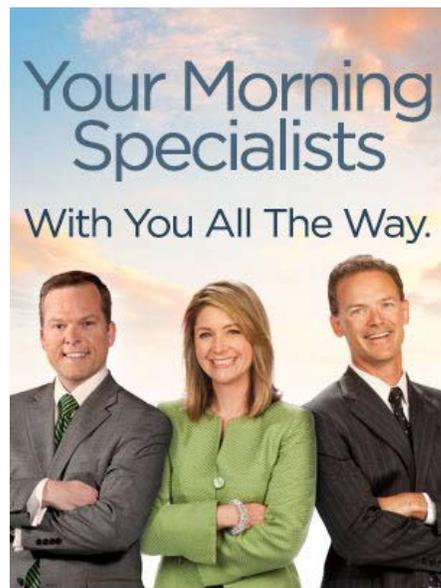
Toys R Us. **A dose of humanity**

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community. My associates are part of the community and once they get excited, it just starts spreading. You have angels coming out of nowhere to help.”

Mitchell Ruff, Walmart store manager

Ruff, who has been with the Walmart company for 23 years, has seen this act of charity performed over and over the past couple years. It never fails to touch him, he said.

"I'm a big-hearted sap," he said with his rich Southern drawl. And it's stories like the two women who have come into his store the past two years that make him emotional.

Two women from the Ashville, N.C., area in their mid-50s paid off 10 customer layaways this year. Combined, these accounts average about \$2,000.

Ruff said that these women, who remain anonymous even to the Hendersonville store, can afford this great act of charity because of a trust fund they inherited that they wish to use to help others.

But they are impacting more than the 10 families behind the accounts they paid for.

"The word kind of travels in the community," Ruff said. "My associates are part of the community and once they get excited, it just starts spreading. You have angels coming out of nowhere to help."

Though not every angel can pay off multiple accounts, they give where they can to help pay off a stranger's account.

"If they can pay off what they can, it gives anyone the help to put Christmas dinner on the table."

Big dollars given anonymously

According to the National Retail Federation, the layaway program has always existed but saw little use until the economic downturn of 2008 led to an increased surge in the program's popularity.

Over the past few years, Kmart has seen \$1.5 million in layaway contracts paid off by Layaway Angels nationwide, according to a Kmart spokesman.

While the average donation amount varies, donors seem to have a similar goal — most Layaway Angels paid off contracts on children's gifts like toys and clothing, a Kmart spokesman said.

According to the National Retail Federation and BIGInsight, as reported in Forbes magazine, layaway shoppers generally earn a household average of \$49,000 a year as opposed to the average holiday shopper who earns roughly \$56,000.

"Layaway Angels are completely organic, or consumer-generated, and not part of a proactive company program. Therefore, we don't necessarily keep track of every single angel, or how much money or how many contracts are paid off," the Kmart spokesman said.

Kmart does keep an [online map](#) of Layaway Angels throughout the country to track the giving.

Walmart was unable to give exact totals of layaway

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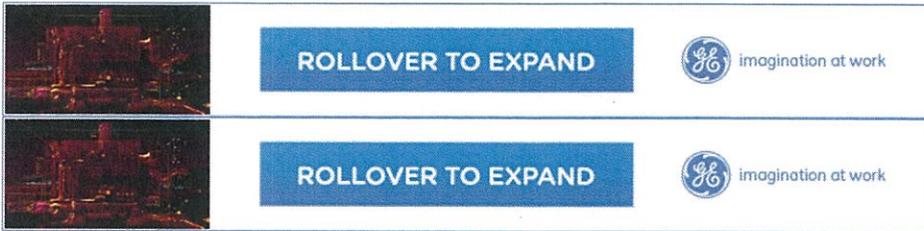
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December 10, 2013

HUFF POST TRAVEL

WestJet Finds Out What Passengers Want For Christmas, Leaves Presents At Baggage Claim (VIDEO)

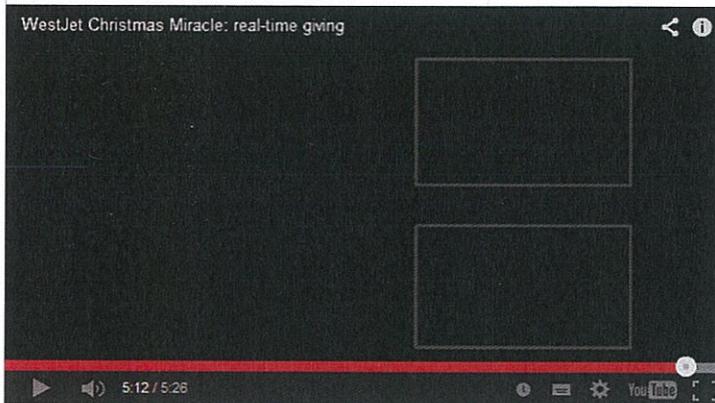
The Huffington Post | By Suzy Strutner
Posted: 12/09/2013 5:46 pm EST | Updated: 12/10/2013 6:17 pm EST

Of course this would happen in Canada.

In a video released Monday, Calgary-based airline WestJet sets up electronic Santa chat boxes in terminals at the Hamilton and Toronto airports. Travelers giggle at the chance to talk live with Santa through a screen, and parents and kids alike tell him what they want for Christmas.

But the surprise is far from over. While the flights soar to their destination in Calgary, WestJet shoppers pick up everybody's Christmas wishes, from "socks and underwear" to "a big TV."

When they get to baggage claim, tired travelers see their luggage -- and big blue boxes with their names on the front and their dream Christmas gifts inside. Faux snow falls, tears are shed, and a giant gingerbread man waddles around the luggage belt eating cookies. The whole situation is precious and magical.



This isn't the first time WestJet has whipped out the holiday cheer. Last year, a flash mob of 150 volunteers performed a jolly dance in the waiting area for a red-eye flight, complete with Santa on the tarmac and stockings stuffed with new iPods.

With the delays and debacles holiday travel can bring, it's awesome to see an airline bringing good tidings. Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good flight!

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December 10, 2013

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WestJet Finds Out What Passengers Want For Christmas, Leaves Presents At Baggage Claim (VIDEO)

The Huffington Post | By Suzy Strutner

Posted: 12/09/2013 5:46 pm EST | Updated: 12/10/2013 6:17 pm EST

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With the delays and debacles holiday travel can bring, it's awesome to see an airline bringing good tidings. Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good flight!

EARLIER ON HUFFPOST:

WestJet's Magic Plane

20 of 31



Getty



Martin, Laura-AUS

From: Ann Strini <missstrini@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 17 December 2013 9:57 AM
To: holidaywrap@wpp.com
Subject: Fwd: You're invited to the Bed Bath & Beyond Gift Of The Day Sweepstakes!

Team,

FYI - enter this contest and see how BBY gives additional entries for likes, follows, e-mail invites, etc.

-Ann

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jo Ellen [joellenfrie@hotmail.com] and Bed Bath & Beyond
<BedBathAndBeyond@eprizepromotions.com>
Date: Mon, Dec 16, 2013 at 5:29 PM
Subject: You're invited to the Bed Bath & Beyond Gift Of The Day Sweepstakes!
To: missstrini@gmail.com

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GIFT OF THE DAY

SWEEPSTAKES

Check it out, Ann,

I saw this and thought of you...

I just entered for the chance to win today's **Gift of the Day**, and you should too!

It's all part of the **Gift of the Day Sweepstakes**, going on now.

Each day a new gift idea will be the featured prize, with a Grand Prize of a \$2,500 Bed Bath & Beyond® Gift Card!

And, to discover gift-giving inspiration, how-to videos, and entertaining ideas you need to "Holiday Your Way," just visit www.bedbathandbeyond.com/holiday.

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ENTER EVERY DAY!**

Good luck,

Jo Ellen and Bed Bath & Beyond®

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Zappos Turns Baggage Carousel Into Wheel of Fortune-Style Game

Brand Makes Sure Thanksgiving Travel Doesn't Totally Suck for One of Its Biggest Markets

By: *Ann-Christine Diaz* Published: *November 27, 2013*

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Zappos Airport Game

Thanksgiving eve is notorious as the busiest -- and arguably the most annoying -- travel day of the year. But not so today for some lucky plane passengers in Texas. Online retailer Zappos has decided to bring a bit of fun to the harried commute by turning the baggage claim at George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston into a pop-up Wheel of Fortune-type game.

Today, a carousel has been adorned with Zappos-branded roulette-wheel type slots designating different prizes, including Zappos gift certificates, North Face jackets, Jansport backpacks, Ugg boots and a Kitchen-Aid mixer. Travelers on seven different American Airline flights beginning at 8:30 am will win whatever prize their suitcases land on. Improv actors and a Zappos crew will also be on hand to MC the festivities and make sure the "game" runs smoothly.

Zappos agency [Mullen](#)  conceived the idea. Over the years the shop has been asked to create out-of-the-box campaigns that surprise consumers in unexpected places -- like, for example, this [banner ad](#) that unleashed an in-the-buff man into surfers' browsers. "Zappos wants to intercept people in their everyday lives and bring surprise and delight," explained Mullen executive creative director Tim Vaccarino. "So right away we're always looking for something fresh in approach."

Last year at this time, the agency came up with the idea to pay some drivers' tolls in Massachusetts. "This year, we looked for a new take on this brief," Mr. Vaccarino said. "This group of stressed out, tortured traveling souls seemed ripe for the picking. Why not deliver them joy right at the baggage claim?"

Zappos chose to hold the event in Houston because the city represents one of its largest customer markets, a spokeswoman said, and is meant to represent the brand's "thank you" to its some of its most loyal patrons.

The event is sure to bring a smile to weary travelers, but what happens when more than one bag falls on the same slot on the carousel? "If two bags fall on the

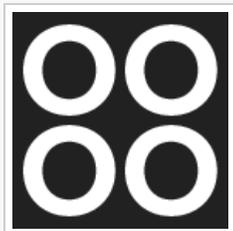
same prize, both people will get it," said Mr. Vaccarino. Also, no hoarders allowed. For those traveling with more than one suitcase, there's a one-prize-per-winner limit.

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TECH THE HALLS

EXPERIENTIAL GADGET SHOPS POP UP FOR THE HOLIDAYS

TECH / 20 DEC 2013

Several technology brands have created **holiday pop-ups** filled with one-of-a-kind prototypes and unique experiences in an effort to get **even closer** to customers while differentiating themselves from the big box retailers to which most technology shoppers default. These stores are more than just places to pick up gifts, also serving as community-gathering spaces for gaming, **DJing**, and product education.



Google's Winter Wonderlab: Google's new **Winter Wonderlab** store in New York's Bryant Park invites customers to escape the frenzy of midtown Manhattan for a moment of **experience-based retail**, in much the same way as newfangled **subway shops**. The pop-up affords passersby hands-on interaction with new gadgets they might not otherwise have the opportunity to experience, including Nexus 7, Chromecast and Chromebooks, in designated "play zones." However, the shop's most touted crowd-pleaser is the **Snow Globe**, an Epcot-inspired orb that allows patrons to film souvenir slow-motion holiday videos that can be shared with friends via social networks.



The Wired Store: Earlier this month, tech magazine *Wired* opened its **eighth annual pop-up**, filled with the newest products and gift ideas from HP, Lumio and Sony, in NYC's Meatpacking District. In addition to musical events, demo days and **gaming sessions**, the store features memorabilia from the year in pop, including Lady Gaga's **Binary Chair** (from her recent *ARTPOP* album) made out of circuit boards, computer chips and LCD screens. Also on display is Katy Perry's **CuteCircuit miniskirt**, as seen in her performance at the 2013 iTunes Festival in London. The garment is programmed to receive and display tweets in real time.

RadioShack's Technology Playground: **RadioShack**, in an attempt to make up for a year of **financial loss**, is rolling out its "Let's Play!" initiative, which includes 100 new interactive concept stores designed to be "neighborhood technology playgrounds." **Two such pop-ups** arrived in New York City in time for holiday shopping, and each features a plethora of touchscreen-enabled displays and customer-controlled demo stations. Interactive speaker walls allow visitors to plug in their own devices to test drive the sound quality of the stores' selection of audio gear and **headphones**.



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Moreover, the store has a DIY area where customers can create their own electronics with the help of in-store experts.

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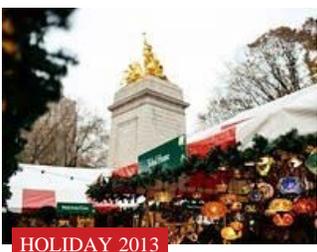
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HOLIDAY 2013

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HOLIDAY 2013

The Best of This Weekend's New Holiday Pop-Up Shops



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HOLIDAY 2013

The Best of This Weekend's New Holiday Pop-Up Shops

Friday, December 13, 2013, by [Nicola Fumo](#)



Photo by Mina Magda/BFAnyc.com

Another weekend closer to Christmas, another batch of **holiday pop-up shops** opening. There are a bunch that will be open **this weekend only**, including **Refinery29's** bazaar in Nolita, **Etsy's** Williamsburg cavalcade, and **WANT Les Essentials de la Vie's** pop-up preview at The Standard Shop.

Click through for more one-weekend-only shops, as well as the details on **Julep's** pop up, which opens this weekend and runs through the 21st. For an ongoing list, head [here](#).

This Weekend Only

Etsy's Holiday Handmade Cavalcade

When: December 14th and 15th, 10am to 5pm daily

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Where: Williamsburg, 50 N. 3rd St

Shop over 40 local vendors from the Etsy NY Team for one-of-a-kind merchandise, including jewelry, crafts, paper goods, bath products, housewares, and more. The first 100 guests on both days will receive a free gift bag filled with treats from the Etsy team and sponsors.



Photo by *Driely S.*

Byronesque

When: December 12th through 15th, 11am to 8pm daily

Where: Chelsea, James A. Farley Post Office at Eighth Ave and 31st St

One part fashion history exhibit, one part vintage shopping experience, this online retailer has gone offline for the first time in a haunting takeover of an abandoned post office. View incredible pieces from the '30s to the '90s like a coat from John Galliano's *Les Incroyables* graduation collection, and shop a selection of true vintage gems from the likes of Margiela, Vivienne Westwood, and Comme des Garçons. [Here's](#) our preview tour.

WANT Les Essentiels de la Vie

When: December 12th through 16th, 10am to 10pm daily

Where: Meatpacking District, The Standard High Line at 848 Washington St

In tandem with their e-comm launch, the leathergoods company is popping up with a spring/summer 2014 preview at The Standard High Line. Pre-purchase all of the newest merch from this cult favorite at the hotel's shop on the ground floor.

Baublebar Holiday Gift Shop

When: December 11th through 15th, Fri 4pm—9pm, Sat—Sun 11am—8pm

Where: NoMad, 230 Fifth Ave, 6th Floor

Stock up on jewelry from the e-tailer while sipping free Kahlua cocktails and getting your nails touched up with mini-manis by Lacquerous. Plus: [hot Santas](#).

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Inwood/Washington Heights

Lower East Side

Meatpacking District/MePa North

Midtown East/Kips Bay

Midtown West/Hell's Kitchen

Murray Hill

Noho/Central Village

Nolita

Soho

Tribeca

Union Square

Upper East Side

Upper West Side/Columbus Circle

West Chelsea/Far West Side

West Village



Photos by Driely S.

Refinery29 Tinseltown Bazaar

When: December 13th through 15th, Fri—Sat 11am—8pm, Sun 11am—7pm

Where: Nolita, 201 Mulberry St

Join the team behind Refinery29 for a special three-day pop up, with merchandise from brands like Cloak & Dagger, Atelier Cologne, Won Hundred, Bing Bang, Dagny + Barstow, Erica Weiner, Mega Mega, and more. In addition to all that, enjoy tons of snacks and a special "holographic holiday shopping experience."

Just Launched

Julep

When: December 13th through 21st, 10am to 8pm daily

Where: Union Square, 102 Fifth Ave

Shop the online beauty brand's nail polishes, skincare, and more IRL at their Lower Fifth Avenue pop-up shop. A mezzanine lounge is stocked with fashion books to browse and a hot cocoa bar for a quick warm up.

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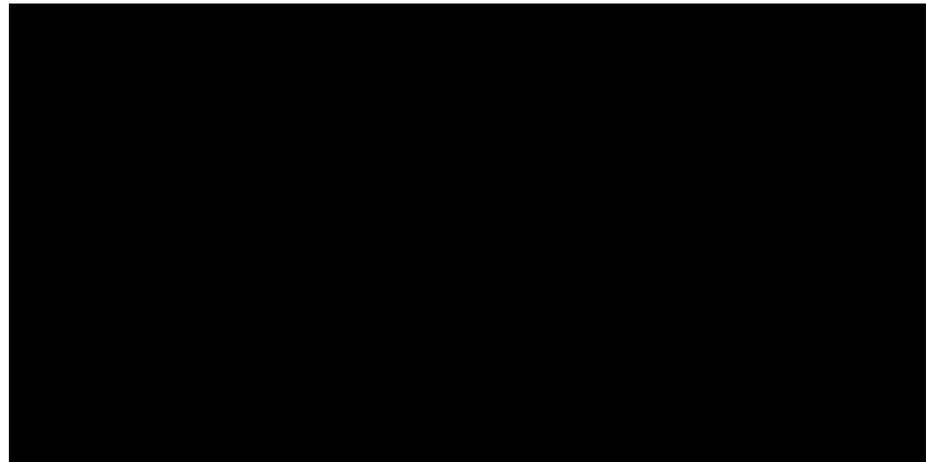
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By SUZANNE KAPNER CONNECT Updated Nov. 25, 2013 7:19 p.m. ET



With Black Friday approaching, we explain how retail discounts generally aren't discounts at all — they are priced into it from the beginning. Suzanne Kapner reports on the News Hub. Photo: Getty Images.

When shoppers head out in search of Black Friday bargains this week, they won't just be going to the mall, they'll be witnessing retail theater.

Stores will be pulling out the stops on deep discounts aimed at drawing customers into stores. But retail-industry veterans acknowledge that, in many cases, those bargains will be a carefully engineered illusion.

The common assumption is that retailers stock up on goods and then mark down the ones that don't sell, taking a hit to their profits. But that isn't typically how it plays out. Instead, big retailers work backward with their suppliers to set starting prices that, after all the markdowns, will yield the profit margins they want.

The red cardigan sweater with the ruffled neck on sale for more than 40% off at \$39.99 was never meant to sell at its \$68 starting price. It was designed with the discount built in.

Buyers don't seem to mind. What they are after, especially in such a lackluster economy, is the feeling they got a deal. Retailers like J.C. Penney Co. JCP +1.09% who try to get out of the game get punished.

"I don't even get excited unless it's 40% off," said Lourdes Torress, a 44-year-old

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Retail Sales on Thanksgiving, Black Friday Rose 2.3%, Report Finds

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the bargains without giving away the store.

The number of deals offered by 31 major department store and apparel retailers increased 63% between 2009 to 2012, and the average discount jumped to 36% from 25%, according to Savings.com, a website that tracks online coupons.

Over the same period, the gross margins of the same retailers—the difference between what they paid for goods and the price at which they sold them—were flat at 27.9%, according to FactSet. The holidays barely made a dent, with margins dipping to 27.8% in the fourth quarter of 2012 from 28% in the third quarter of that year.



Enlarge Image

Customer discounts are way up. But retailers' profit margins are flat. *Claudio Papapietro for The Wall Street Journal*

take heavier-than-planned markdowns. Stores also field loss leaders, true bargains that pinch profits but are aimed at getting customers into their stores. Most deals, however, are planned to be profitable by setting list prices well above where goods are actually expected to sell.

Retailers could run into legal trouble if they never try to sell goods at their starting price. Otherwise, there's nothing wrong with the practice. Companies can be pretty frank about how things work.

Retailers Try Out New Ways to Set Prices

former **Apple Inc.** **AAPL +1.85%** executive Ron Johnson, is again playing the standard discount game under new CEO Myron "Mike" Ullman. But first it has to adjust its prices.

"We must and will compete to win," Mr. Ullman said last week on a conference call with analysts. "That means initially marking up our goods to sufficient levels to protect our margins when the discount or sale is applied."

Here's how it works, according to one industry consultant describing an actual sweater sold at a major retailer. A supplier sells the sweater to a retailer for roughly \$14.50. The suggested retail price is \$50, which gives the retailer a roughly 70% markup. A few sweaters sell at that price, but more sell at the first markdown of \$44.99, and the bulk sell at the final discount price of \$21.99. That produces an average unit retail price of \$28 and gives the store about a 45% gross margin on the product.

technical designer, as she browsed the sale racks at Macy's Inc.'s flagship store in New York on a recent afternoon.

The manufactured nature of most discounts raises questions about the wisdom of standing in line for the promotional frenzy that kicks off the holiday shopping season. It also explains how retailers have been able to ramp up

"A lot of the discount is already priced into the product. That's why you see much more stable margins," said Liz Dunn, an analyst with Macquarie Equities Research.

Retailers including **Best Buy Co.** **BBY +2.37%**, **Wal-Mart Stores Inc.** **WMT +0.10%** and Macy's are warning this will be an unusually competitive holiday season and that all the deals could hurt margins. That can happen when chains have to fight hard for sales or get stuck with excess inventory and have to

Penney, which made a disastrous attempt to move away from discounts under



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Retailers didn't always price this way. It used to be that most items were sold at full price, with a limited number of sales to clear unsold inventory. That began to change in the 1970s and 1980s, when a rash of store openings intensified competition and forced retailers to look for new ways to stand out.



Enlarge Image

Most deals are planned to be profitable by setting list prices high. *Claudio Papapietro for The Wall Street Journal*

Enter high-low pricing, a strategy designed to create excitement and lure shoppers by dropping prices for occasional sales. Initially, retailers practiced this strategy with restraint. At Mervyn's, a department-store chain that has since gone out of business, discounted items couldn't exceed 30% of total sales, said Mark Cohen, a professor at the Columbia Business School who worked at the company and has held other retail posts including CEO of [Sears Canada Inc.](#)

SCC.T +1.59%

But the floodgates have opened. In a 2012 presentation, Mr. Johnson, then still Penney's CEO, said the company was selling fewer than one out of every 500 items at full price. Customers were receiving an average discount of 60%, up from 38% a decade earlier. The twist is they weren't saving more. In fact, the average price paid by customers stayed about the same over that period. What changed was the initial price, which increased by 33%.

"The silliness of it all is that the original price from which the discount is computed is often specious to begin with, because items hardly ever sell at that price, which makes the discount less legitimate," Columbia's Mr. Cohen said.



Can't wait until after Thanksgiving dinner to find all the great shopping deals on offer? MarketWatch's Jim Jelter shares the best tips and apps for scouting out the sales.

The rise of e-commerce has made it possible to track pricing on the Web and see how much time products spend at their list prices. [Amazon.com Inc.](#)

AMZN +1.79%

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is featuring a [Samsung](#) 60-inch HDTV in its 2013 Holiday Gift Guide. The TV is selling at a 45% discount to its list price of \$1,799.99. But, according to [Decide.com](#), a price-tracking firm owned by eBay Inc., the TV hasn't sold for anywhere near the list price in months. The most it has sold for in the past eight months is \$1,297.85,

according to [Decide.com](#). As recently as October, it was priced at \$997.99, about the same as its current sale price.

An Amazon spokeswoman said that "showing the most 'recent' price can be somewhat arbitrary and could be confusing to our customers," since the retailer changes prices so frequently in an effort to provide the best deals.

Another tactic involves raising selling prices ahead of the holidays before the discounts kick in. In an analysis for *The Wall Street Journal*, price-tracking firm Market Track LLC looked at the online price fluctuations of 1,743 products in November 2012. Prices climbed an average of 8% in the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving for 366, or about a fifth, of the products; the items were then discounted on Black Friday. Toys and tools had the biggest pre-Black Friday price increases—about 23%.

Mr. Johnson lost his job after he abandoned the discount system abruptly in favor of everyday low prices and sales plunged. But retail executives said he hit on an important insight, that prices had lost their integrity.

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Retailers are supposed to offer items at regular prices "for a reasonably substantial period of time" before marking them down, according to the Federal Trade Commission.

Cynthia Spann is suing Penney over what she says are phantom discounts. She bought three blouses at 40% off the regular price of \$30 in March 2011, according to her complaint. But instead of \$30, the prevailing price for the blouses in the three months preceding her purchase was \$17.99—exactly the same as the sale price she paid, the lawsuit alleges. Ms. Spann said in the complaint that she wouldn't have bought the blouses if she had known the discount wasn't real.

Through her lawyer, Ms. Spann declined to be interviewed.

A spokeswoman for Penney declined to comment on the litigation, but said the retailer's policy is to sell all items at their original price for a reasonable period of time before putting them on sale.

Similar cases are pending against Kohl's Corp. and Jos A. Bank Clothiers Inc. A Kohl's spokeswoman didn't reply to requests for comment. In its most recent quarterly filing, the company said the legal proceedings it faces likely won't have a material effect. A Jos A. Bank spokesman declined to comment on the pending litigation or the company's pricing strategy, but said two other lawsuits making similar claims were dismissed earlier this year.

Retailers, having trained customers to shop for deals, are stuck with the strategy for now. Macy's tried to cut back on coupons in 2007.

"Customers stopped shopping," said Chief Executive [Terry Lundgren](#), "so we knew that was a bad idea."

Write to Suzanne Kapner at Suzanne.Kapner@wsj.com

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10

The History of Department Store Holiday Window Displays

Victoria Lewis

In major cities around the world, the holiday season is often heralded by the appearance of festive decor in shop windows. From grocery stores to home-decor boutiques, most retailers opt to ornament their storefronts to mark the beginning of the busiest shopping months of the year. However, it is the major department stores that are best known for their holiday displays.

Now elaborately planned projects, department store holiday windows trace their beginnings to the Industrial Revolution. In the late 1800s, the widespread availability of plate glass allowed store owners to build large windows spanning the lengths of their shops where merchandise from the store could be appealingly displayed to draw in customers. Thus the notion of “window-shopping” was born.

FEATURE



Children looking through the glass window of Macy's in 1907.

R.H. Macy of Macy's in New York City was one of the first department store owners to construct special holiday presentations. And in 1862, he was the first to feature an in-store Santa for children to visit. Several years later, in 1874, he created one of the first major holiday window displays with a collection of porcelain dolls from around the world and scenes from Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

By the early 1900s, many of the largest retailers in the United States had set up stores in New York, Philadelphia and Chicago. Competition for customers occurred all year but reached its pinnacle each holiday season. To lure shoppers, store owners and managers began to compete to create the most elaborate window scenes. Writing in 1899 in *The Show Window* magazine, L. Frank Baum (better known as the author of "The Wizard of Oz") explained that "the recent holiday displays have thoroughly demonstrated the progress of the art of window trimming. Every village and hamlet in the land has had some sort of a window display of unusual merit to attract the public and further the sale of Christmas wares."

FEATURE



A line to see the unveiling of a Macy's window in 1939.

In 1914, Lord & Taylor opened its flagship Fifth Avenue store. The store quickly became famous for its window displays. To aid in the process of creating these spectacles, staff built hydraulic lifts under each window. This innovative new method allowed teams of artisans to work on new decorations in a sub-basement, then the platform could be raised to street level overnight for a dramatic unveiling event.



“Have yourself a merry little Christmas,” a throwback window displays at Bloomingdale’s.

With Saks Fifth Avenue and Bergdorf Goodman in the mix, competition for the most elaborate windows boomed. This rivalry reached new levels with the advent of mechanization. Macy’s is said to have displayed a not-for-sale mechanical singing bird in 1858. But it was Lord & Taylor that really pioneered this effort when, in 1938, the owners eschewed the traditional method of presenting store merchandise in favor of a purely decorative display of gilded bells that swung in sync with the sounds of recorded bells. At the same time, electricity allowed shop owners to light their windows at night, drawing crowds to the stores far past closing time and marking them not just as retail outposts but as sightseeing destinations.

FEATURE

Of course, these holiday displays were by no means limited to New York City. In Chicago, the tradition can be traced back to the early days of Marshall Field. Founded in 1852, the store began, like many department stores, as a dry goods depot but quickly grew. In 1897, the store’s display manager, Arthur Fraiser, began to implement window decorations, focusing specifically on Christmas toy displays.

Harry Gordon Selfridge, the American founder of the iconic British department store Selfridges, first worked at Marshall Field, where he is credited with coining the marketing phrase “Only shopping days until Christmas.” When he founded his namesake store in London in 1909, he also employed elaborate holiday window decorations, prompting other institutional retailers, such as Harrods, to follow suit.

Over the years, department stores have employed increasingly technologically advanced and elaborate methods to ornament their windows. When air-conditioning became readily available, for example, Dallas-based Neiman Marcus filled a copper-tubing tree with Freon to create the illusion of frosted branches. And in the 1950s, Washington, D.C.’s Woodward & Lothrop opted to house live penguins in its display.

Hundreds of designers and craftsmen worked together behind the scenes to produce these complex scenes over the years. “Window dressing is, at first glance, so gorgeously useless that it resists all comparison with other derided professions,” Simon Doonan, the quirky designer behind the Barneys windows for many years, has said. In fact, artists such as Andy Warhol, Salvador Dali, Maurice Sendak and Jasper Johns, all worked on window displays during their careers.

Now, major department stores begin to plot the themes for their holiday windows more than a year in advance. With storyboards, auditions and custom-commissioned pieces, “It’s no different than a small Broadway production,” Manoel Renha, a window designer at Lord & Taylor, told The New York Times. “It’s very elaborate.”

And like a Broadway performance, the windows have become a destination attraction all their own. Though their goal may be to entice shoppers to make holiday purchases, many people visit simply to be delighted by the shows. Each year, tourists descend on major cities like New York and London during the Christmas season, many of them with holiday-window viewing at the top of their agendas. By Lord & Taylor’s count, more than 250,000 people pass by their windows daily during the holidays. Additionally, between their unveiling at Thanksgiving and Christmas Day, over 8 million customers will visit the store.

Today, what began as a retail strategy has become an iconic holiday experience. And though we are often guilty of looking through the glass of our phone screens more than the glass of any store windows, there is no doubt that the crowds will continue to gather in front of department stores when their decorations are unveiled this season. Some things are best left to tradition.

FEAT



“Early Birds and Night Owls,” a modern-day display by Bloomingdale’s



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The Black Friday Numbers Don't Add Up

02 Dec 2013 / By: Frank Badillo

Don't believe the numbers. The early sales results for Thanksgiving and Black Friday just don't add up when you put them side-by-side. Believing all of them means suspending simple rules of math. Here's a sampling:

- Sales at brick and mortar stores rose 2.3% at the same time they fell about 8%.
- Online sales rose about 4% or about 19%—or maybe it was 17%.
- Topline sales fell 3%—but by that source fewer people shopped online at the same time sales at brick and mortar stores dropped about 8%.

So what's believable and what's not?

Frankly, the least believable number is the one that was probably most quoted the last couple days—that sales for Thanksgiving and Black Friday fell 3%. That number is based on a survey of 4,500 people that primarily is a good reminder that survey respondents cannot accurately estimate their expected spending this year compared with last year.

Among the most believable numbers is the ShopperTrak estimate that brick and mortar sales on Thursday and Friday rose about 2.3% from a year ago on store traffic that was up 2.8%. The ShopperTrak data is based on recorded observations in specific stores. So it should provide good numbers—at least for the mix of stores where it has a presence.

By the way, the ShopperTrak numbers are in the ballpark range of our forecast for 3% growth for brick and mortar stores this holiday.

The online estimates of about 19% growth (IBM) and 17% (ComScore) for Thanksgiving and Black Friday also are among the most believable numbers. They also jibe with our forecast for 16% growth in online sales this holiday.

These most believable estimates are all consistent with recent sales trends. They also are consistent with the last spending intentions reported by shoppers in our monthly ShopperScape® survey—which indicated no big falloff in spending plans by shoppers as they approached the holiday.

In the end, the best gauge of the start to the holiday won't come until a handful of retailers start reporting their monthly comparable sales numbers on Thursday. The government-reported retail sales on Dec. 12 also will be a good measure.

In the meantime, don't be too quick to believe every new holiday sales number reported out there—and you can be sure that more are on their way in the wake of Cyber Monday.

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I cover major developments in the retail industry.

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when the company was not promoting effectively. Overall, I estimate that sales increased by 3-6%, not enough to make up for the shorter selling period.

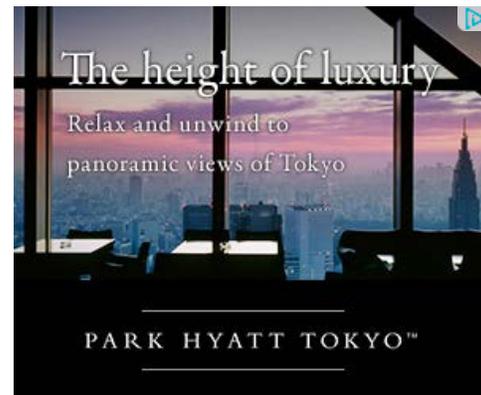
Despite this, I think there were still some retailers that drew traffic and drove business. I think specialty stores like The Gap, Old Navy, Oshkosh and others who had 50% off sales in their total store had a strong customer response and did very well. Among the department stores Macy's and J.C.Penney saw big crowds. J.C.Penney had some of the longest lines at its registers. Even Kohl's grabbed the consumers attention on Black Friday with some strong electronic and apparel buys and gave away a \$15 Kohl's Cash bonus for every \$50 spent in the store. Certainly the cold weather helped move outerwear and sweaters in all stores.

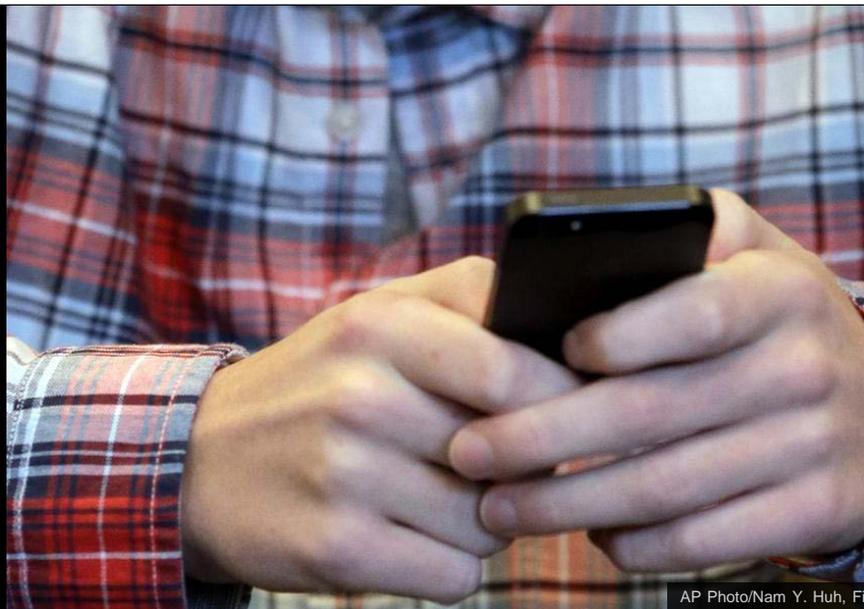
But wait...it's not over. Not by a long shot. Monday is Cyber Monday where special values are available on the Internet. Some stores, like Macy's and Best Buy make these values available in stores as well as online. On Sunday and Monday, December 1 and 2, J.C.Penney has a sale called "More Fa La La for less Moo La La" which will be followed by "The Big Sale". Target is running a Cyber Week Sale and on Wednesday December 4 Macy's launches a strong Friends & Family event. None of this is a surprise and underscores the promotional environment I had forecast.

There was a time when customers came to the store to shop on Black Friday with their children. They wanted to know what their kids wanted for Christmas by wandering through the toy departments of department stores. In the 1950's I was a department manager in Macy's Herald Square and remember all the broken toys we had to cart off the floor after the kids left. But the real shopping and buying came days later, when the parents came back to buy gifts for their whole family.

That mood is gone – it was a much more genteel shopping experience, and the specials were less important than the full assortment that reflected the latest trends in fashion and the merchandise could be worn next year. Customers had time to consider their purchases and make careful selections knowing they'd be hanging on to the items for quite some time. Today, the purchasing is driven by here and now promotions that have become essentially daily occurrences during the Holiday season, making the sale events a blur, with the total retail sales number growing modestly as demand is spread around but not boosted all that much.

More on Forbes:





AP Photo/Nam Y. Huh, File

Holiday Shopping With Apps

There are now countless smartphone apps that can help navigate the best deals in-store and online. These apps are also time-savers, giving you extra time to sit back and enjoy those latkes and eggnog. (AP Photo/Nam Y. Huh, File)

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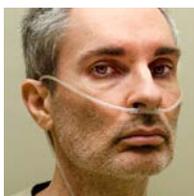
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black friday

Black Friday 2013: Retailers, Consumers Fight Tooth and Nail for Holiday Sales

Posted by [Abe Sauer](#) on November 29, 2013 03:03 PM



 **New Belgium Brewing** 
@newbelgium 

Don't worry, we've got more Fat Tire... #BlackFriday
newbelgium.com/accumulatehops...

With seven million fewer people than last year expected to shop this holiday weekend, Black Friday promised to offer even greater, more desperate discounts and the subsequent sad, human spectacle those discounts guarantee. A tragic situation for retailers; a feast for the unsympathetic, bloodthirsty spectators of Rome America.

Still, the mad rush so far seems to have been worth it. [Early reports](#) are indicating solid consumer turnouts for Thanksgiving day/night sales, while e-commerce is already up **7 percent** this year compared to last, according to IBM's Benchmark data. Mobile has appeared to be a strong player this year, accounting for 37 percent of all online shopping traffic and nearly 22 percent of sales as of noon, eastern-time, today.

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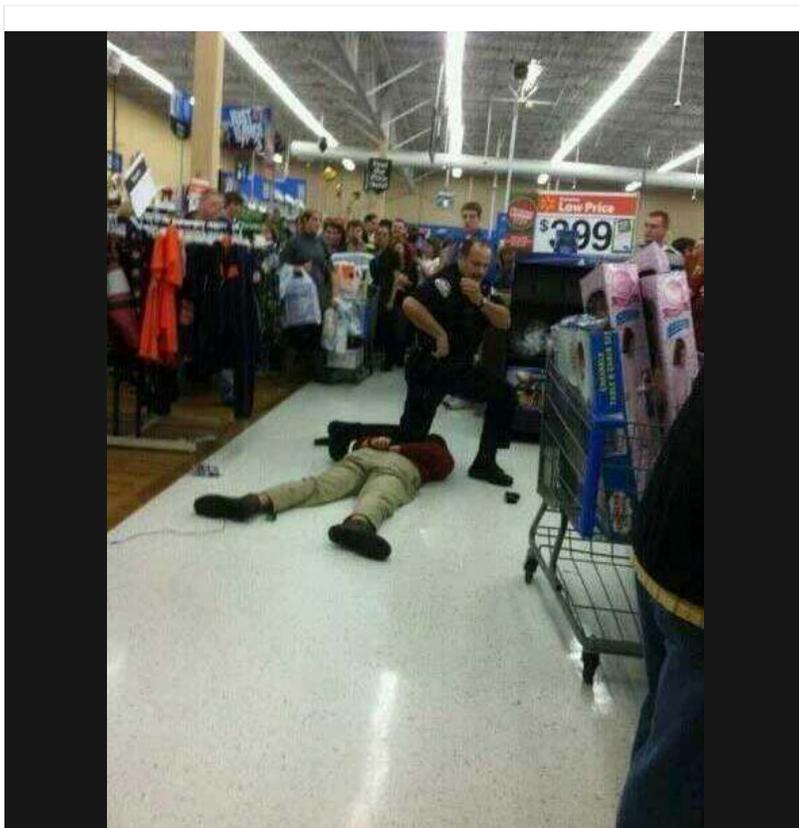
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With sales starting as early as the afternoon of Thanksgiving itself, shoppers and spectators alike still well lubricated with wine, those looking for the melees of Black Friday found it early this year. Walmart seemed to be the epicenter of the chaos but other stores got mentions as well. So here's a Twitter round-up of some of the more notable incidents, plus one development that proves it isn't only Black Friday that's moving to Thursday.



Brett

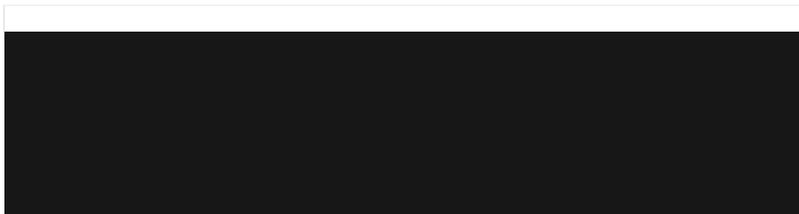
@northwestblazer

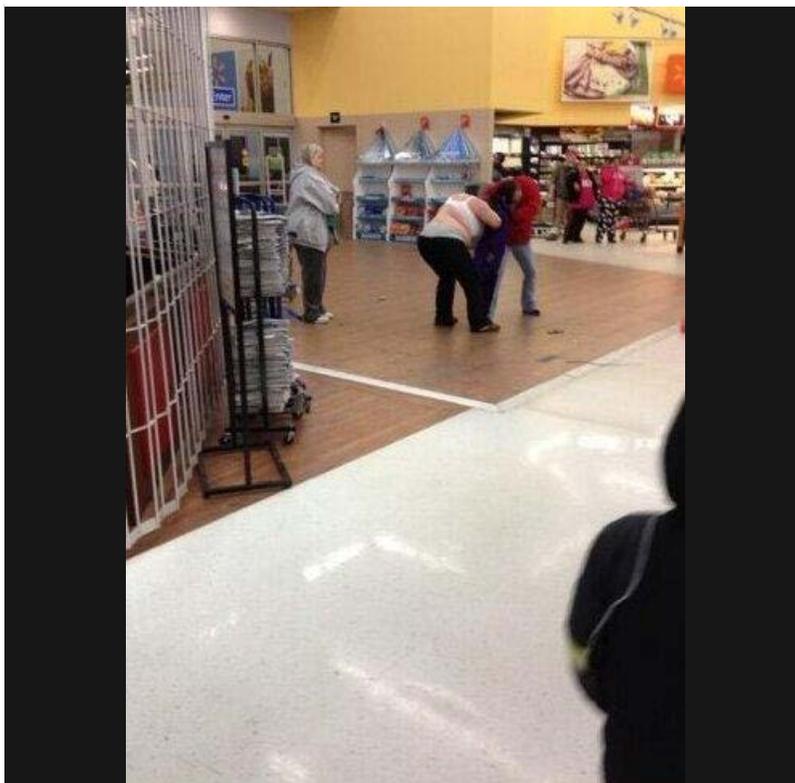
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let the fun begin

From most reports, the action all around begins and ends with Walmart. Having already reported worse than expected [recent sales numbers](#), the House of Walton is in a frenzy to turn out some better numbers in grim circumstances. (It isn't the only one though; Target went so far as to hire [a former CIA ops specialist](#) to advise about boosting holiday sales.) In the Black Friday arms race, many retailers—Target and Walmart included—opened the [evening of Thanksgiving](#) itself.

By the morning of Black Friday, two separate Twitter hashtags were already leading the pack and both were Walmart centric. The first was #WalmartFights, a hashtag that is, sadly, pretty much self descriptive:





Weston Bin Laden
@wolfgang256

Follow

[#walmartfights](#) Oooo kill em



Juha van 't Zelfde
@juhavantzelfde

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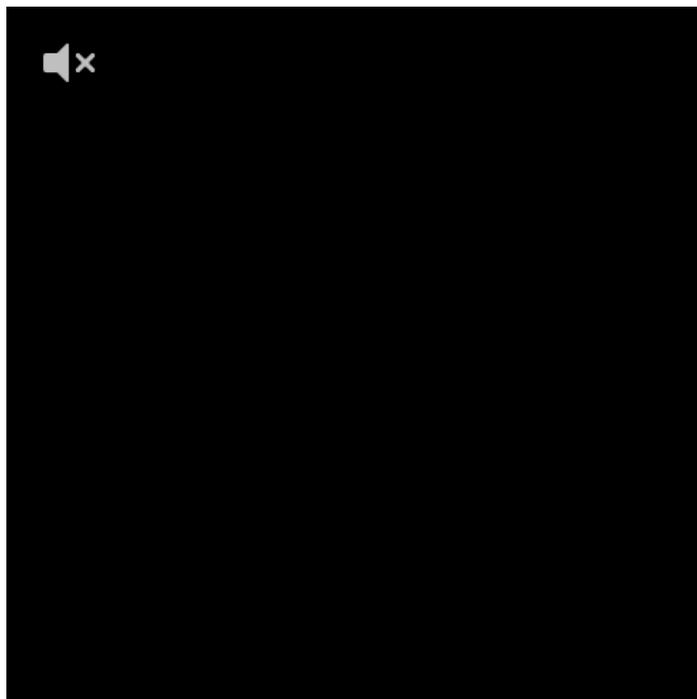


DeMarko Gage :)
@DeMarko_Gage

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This is why i dont do #BlackFriday because of this >>>
vine.co/v/hMXeh7jloDK #WalmartFights

8:52 PM - 29 Nov 2013



Vine @vineapp

#WalmartFights went on to become a Twitter trend, with numerous posts demonstrating that you can take the Friday out of Black Friday but you can't take the Black Friday out of American consumers. In reality, Walmart is instituting new measures—like [wristbands](#)—to avoid problems and, honestly, it seemed the #WalmartFights reports were just the same few incidents blasted around in an echo chamber of users who joyfully wanted to find some violent pandemonium in the annual event. In a few cases, it wasn't even clear if some of the pictures were recycled from previous years.

#TargetFights and #KmartFights did not produce similar results. Why?



The Moe Dome
@The_MOE_Dome

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#WalmartFights ?? why are their No #TargetFights? or #ToysRusFights? Because media doesn't notice them - they are lesser discount stores-LOL

7:46 PM - 29 Nov 2013

Beyond the ballyhooed bloodshed, retailers went into Friday in good spirits, their collective move to Thursday having seemingly paid off. [Walmart reported](#) "10 million register transactions between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m." on Thanksgiving. Target also reported encouraging numbers. But it appears that Kohl's [may be one of the biggest winners](#); this despite having its name attached to one of the worst incidents involving Illinois police [shooting a suspected shoplifter](#).

Speaking of Minnesota-based retailers, Best Buy could be a very unexpected winner this holiday season. As [one analyst wrote](#) after personally witnessing improved customer service, "People were buying things...not showrooming."





Kate Renner
@rennerKSTP



Fleet Farm refused to open on Thanksgiving, so employees could be w/ family. Now lines are long on Black Fri

Lesser noticed Twitter hashtags involving Walmart included #FreeTheWalmartElves and #WalmartStrikers. At least some of the activists behind these feeds--appearing seem to come from the hacker group "Anonymous," who replaced pricing signs at some Walmarts with statements about increasing worker wages:

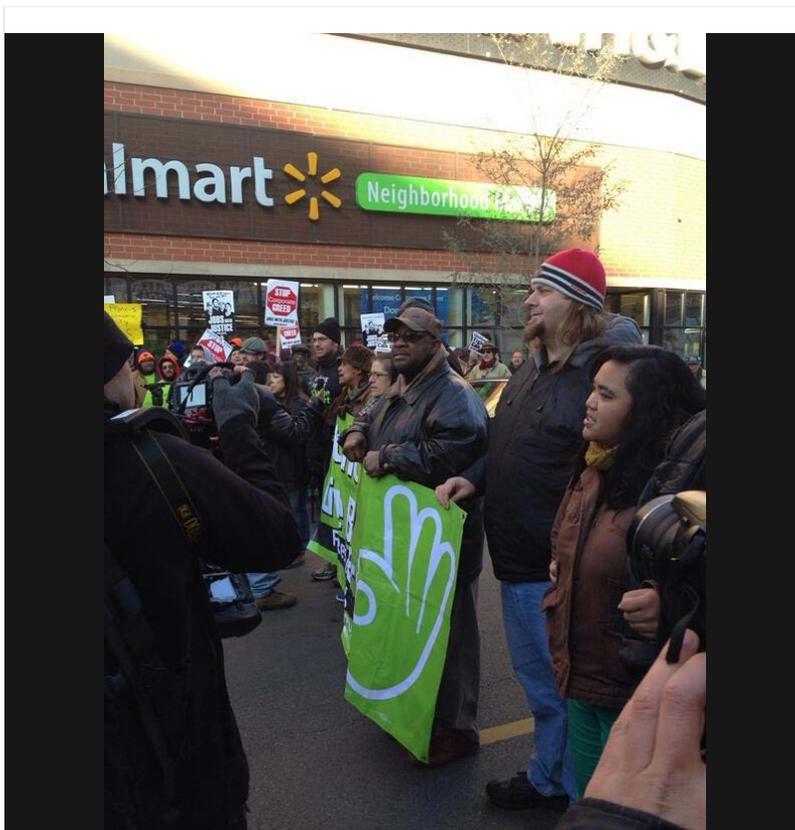


Anonymous Operations
@YourAnonCentral



Instead of going and getting into [#WalmartFights](#) support the [#WalmartStrikers](#) and [#FreeTheWalmartElves](#) !!!

Numerous strikes [had been planned](#) for Black Friday and as the day rolled on, strikers outside Walmarts tweeted their results. In response, Walmart's CEO hit the morning talk show circuit [to defend the biggest of the boxes](#).



Fight For 15

@fightfor15

 Follow

[#walmartstrikers](#) & allies have blocked N. Broadway & pledge not to be moved.





Arun Gupta
@arunindy

Follow

OUR Walmart protesters gather outside Laurel MD supercenter. Try to enter Walmart property. #walmartstrikers

Walmart was not the only retailer getting an earful from workers though. In Minneapolis, maintenance workers for Target gathered outside its headquarters to air their grievances.

But fights and sales aside, maybe the most interesting and predictive development is that Black Friday doesn't seem to be the only day on the move. The in-store action may have moved to Thursday night but so has Cyber Monday. Walmart also reported some 400 million website page views on Thursday. Meanwhile, Amazon merchant agents reported that Thanksgiving sales on the online retailer were up, year over year, near 50 percent on the holiday day. Then there is Target; a *Star-Tribune* reporter noted Friday morning that Target saw record Thanksgiving traffic to its website.

These reports hint at a future when all Black Friday action will be online, so appreciate the real-life carnage while you can, America.

At top, our favorite Black Friday "fights" tweet sees New Belgium Brewing manipulate a photo of Black Friday consumers fighting over a case of its Fat Tire label beer.

More about: [Retail](#), [Black Friday](#), [Thanksgiving](#), [Cyber Monday](#), [Holiday Season](#), [Holiday Shopping](#), [Walmart](#), [Target](#), [Best Buy](#), [Social Media](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Consumer Spending](#), [IBM Benchmark](#), [E-Commerce](#), [Mobile](#), [Amazon](#), [eBay](#)

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Don't worry, we've got more Fat Tire... #BlackFriday <http://t.co/fbebMYNKvG>
<http://pic.twitter.com/A1g502...>

[Brands Set Off on All Out Marketing Blitz in Race for Black Friday Sales](#)

Thanksgiving is a time to share with loved ones, express gratitude, and take stock of the ad frenz...

[Black Friday Dwindles, Blurred By Jumpy Consumers, Desperate Retailers](#)

And then there were two. A few more deals and a few more days before #BlackFriday. <http://t.co/1hb...>

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PLACED BLOG

Posted by **Sarah Radwanick** on **November 30, 2013**[Previous](#)

Black Friday Top Brick-and-Mortar Retailers: 2013 Winners



Black Friday, the biggest offline shopping day of the year, saw millions of shoppers hunt for deals at retailers across the U.S.

To better understand which retailers were most successful at driving people into stores on Black Friday, we analyzed offline shopping behaviors from our **Placed Insights** service, which measures more than 125,000 U.S. smartphone panelists who have opted-in to share their location.

The study revealed this year's Black Friday winners:

- Walmart was by far the top shopping destination this Black Friday, beating out its nearest competitor, Target, with more than twice the share of total shoppers.
- Best Buy, which we **reported** secured a top spot in its Thanksgiving debut, remained a top destination for Black Friday shoppers ranking as the #3 most-visited retailer.
- Retailers that chose to remain closed on Thanksgiving, including The Home Depot, Lowe's, Sam's Club, and Costco, lost no time in driving people into stores on Black Friday. All four retailers secured spots within the Black Friday Top 10.
- Macy's was the winner among department stores, ranking as the top gainer in week-over-week traffic share followed by J.C. Penney, Kohl's, and Sears.
- Big box and department stores weren't the only ones that saw solid gains on Black Friday. Apparel and specialty retailers Old Navy and Victoria's Secret, secured 2 of the top 3 spots in the top-gainers ranking.
- American Eagle, which won **last Black Friday**, once again displayed a strong showing in store traffic on the busiest shopping day of the year.

Top 10 Visited: Black Friday Retailers by Share of Visitors*
Source: Placed

Rank	Retailer
1	Walmart
2	Target
3	Best Buy
4	The Home Depot
5	Lowe's
6	Kohl's
7	Macy's
8	J.C. Penney
9	Sam's Club
10	Costco

**Based on Top 100 Retailers, excludes drug stores*

Top 10 Gainers: Black Friday Retailers by Week-Over-Week Market Share*
Source: Placed

Rank	Retailer
1	Old Navy
2	Macy's
3	Victoria's Secret
4	J.C. Penney
5	Dick's Sporting Goods
6	Kohl's
7	Sears
8	Sports Authority
9	Best Buy
10	American Eagle Outfitters

**Based on Share of Visitors on Black Friday vs. previous Friday (11/22/2013)*

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BLACK FRIDAY: NO HOLIDAY FOR ADVERTISERS



CONTENTS

THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR?.....	1
SO IT BEGINS.....	2
MORE THAN THE USUAL SUSPECTS.....	4
FROM A TIME TO SHOP TO AN ACTUAL HOLIDAY	6
CONCLUSION	7

THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR?

For decades, consumers have been fighting the post-Thanksgiving coma on the Friday after Thanksgiving—all in the hopes of getting the can't-beat, must-have deals on holiday shopping. The day when booming holiday sales are supposed to put retailers back “in the black” is now a major cultural event, and also a make-or-break time for retailers. Black Friday sales—which now extend from Thanksgiving evening until Cyber Monday—totaled an estimated \$59.1 billion in 2012, with 89 million consumers visiting U.S. stores and websites during this period.¹

Advertising is a critical component of retailers' strategies for snagging consumers during the holiday season. And the battle for market share has never been tougher, with aggressive online sellers making it easier for shoppers to compare prices—and avoid visiting stores, where they can be enticed into making impulse buys. As a result, retailers spend millions on advertising hoping to get shoppers to visit them first.

In this report, Kantar Media has taken a look at ads featuring Black Friday messaging to determine critical trends driving the Black Friday advertising bonanza, using 2012 data as a benchmark for the trends we can expect this year. We've used our AdScope tool to analyze occurrence, expenditure, and creative data for ads that featured “Black Friday” messaging during the three weeks leading up to the year's biggest sales event. We studied ads that aired from 11/5-11/23 in 2012, across network, cable, spot, and syndicated television (including both English and Spanish-language ads), as well as FSI/coupon promotions. Highlights of this brief include:

- **Measured retail ad and promotion expenditure by day, week, and channel**
- **Measured TV ad expenditure by retail advertiser and product category**
- **Creative strategy analysis:**
 - Target
 - Walmart

¹ National Retail Federation. October 29, 2013. <http://www.nrf.com/modules.php?name=News&op=viewlive&sp_id=1462>.

SO IT BEGINS...

For seasonal advertising, knowing when to start can be critical. Black Friday has become a synonym for savings, and a few advertisers have actually begun featuring it throughout the year. Home Depot, for example, launched a radio and television campaign in March 2012 with taglines like “Black Friday prices are back in bloom”. Meanwhile, in an April 2012 radio ad campaign Consumer Electronic Store HHGregg advertised its grand opening sale as “bigger than Black Friday” in August.

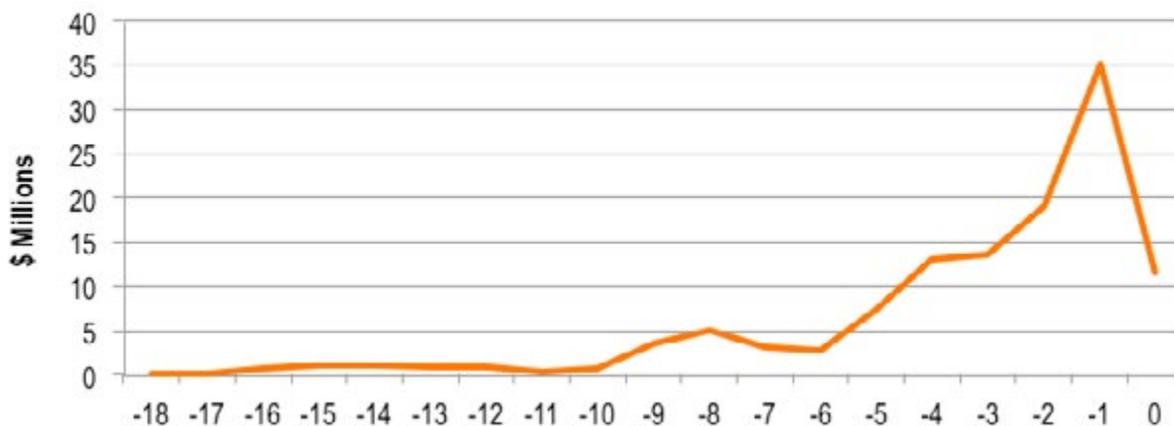
However, ads focused actual Black Friday sales trend to be clustered in the month of November – in stark contrast to general holiday ads, which have begun to surface as early as September. A look at Black Friday-specific ad spend in 2012 shows that ads typically began around three weeks before Black Friday, and spiked on three key dates leading up to Black Friday.

The first spike occurred eight days before the event (11/15/12), followed by a surge of spend four days before (11/19/12), and a final push the on the eve of Black Friday (11/22/12).

Promotional calendars followed a similar spending schedule in 2012, with the bulk of promotional spend taking place the week beginning on 11/19/12—totaling \$87.5 million, or 29% of Black Friday promotional spend from 10/29/12 to 11/19/12. And mass merchandisers focused more than one third of their Black Friday spend on the week of 11/19.

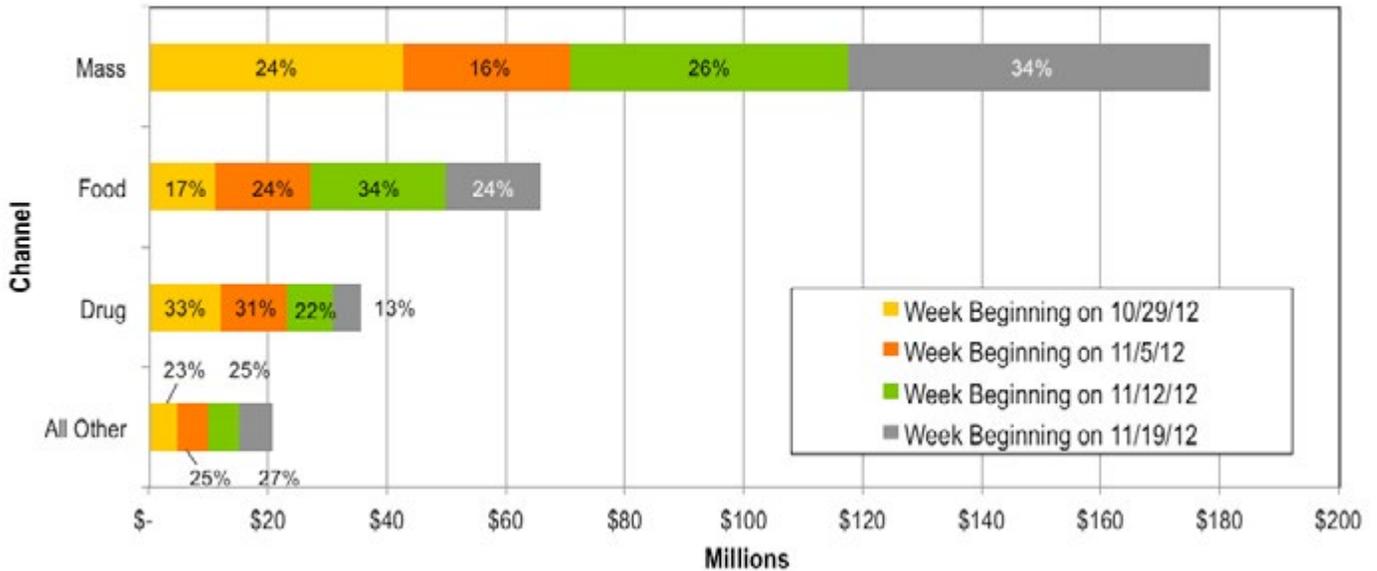
In the week leading up to Black Friday, mass merchants accounted for 70% of retail ad and promotion spending, compared to 59% in the four weeks leading up to Black Friday and 55% throughout the full 2012 calendar year.

2012 COMBINED BLACK FRIDAY TV AD SPEND PER DAY DAY ZERO = BLACK FRIDAY



Source: Kantar Media
Time Period: 11/5/12 - 11/23/12

RETAILERS' AD & PROMOTION SPENDING BY WEEK



Dollar General was the first to run Black Friday-themed promotional deals, starting as early as the week beginning on 10/29/12 with promotions accounting for 11% of their Black Friday budget. These coupons, however, were really promoting a November 11 pre-Black Friday sales event, similar to the Home Depot ads in March that used the term “Black Friday” as a reference point for competitive prices. Dollar General spent the remaining 89% of their Black Friday budget the following week beginning on 11/5/12, running their significant promotions earlier than Walmart and Target in order to gain more visibility amongst the other big retailers (a smart move considering Dollar General’s Black Friday budget was around 1% of Walmart’s or Target’s).

DOLLAR GENERAL FSI WEEK BEGINNING ON 10/29/12



MORE THAN THE USUAL SUSPECTS

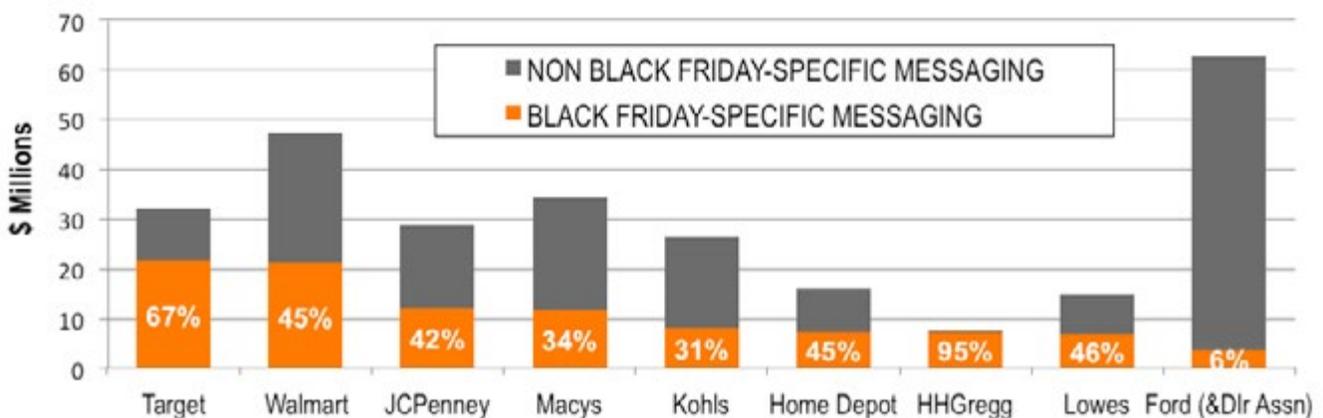
Among the top 15 spenders of Black Friday ad messaging in 2012, there was a large representation of traditional Black Friday retailers, including Walmart, Target, JCPenney, Macy's, Kohl's and Best Buy. Walmart and Target were the top spenders in Black Friday TV ad messaging, with \$22.5 million and \$21.7 million in 2012 spend respectively, followed by JCPenney, Macy's and Kohl's. These results parallel Black Friday shopping trends, with more than half of shoppers visiting department stores last year, 40% shopping at discount stores, 29% at clothing stores and 33% at electronics stores, according to a BIGinsight survey conducted for the National Retail Federation.

However, there are also some less-expected advertisers on the list. Even though a car seems extravagant for a holiday gift, automakers Ford, Toyota and Hyundai

entered the top 15 in 2012, in what may be a first (no automotive advertiser reached these levels in 2011). Promoting deals like 0% financing and cash back, these dealerships honored special prices for a full week or more.

Home improvement stores like Home Depot and Lowes also made the top 15, advertising appliances like refrigerators for storing holiday eats, power tools "for somebody on your list", and holiday trees, lights and decorations. Sprint stood out on the top 15 list as the only wireless telecom provider, promoting Galaxy S3 sales and unlimited data plans with videos of cats and dogs meowing/barking to the tune of Jingle Bells.

TOP 2012 TV ADVERTISERS BY BLACK FRIDAY MESSAGING SPEND



Source: Kantar Media
Time Period: Black Friday TV Ad Spend from 11/5/12-11/23/12 vs. All Other Themed TV Ad Spend from 11/5/12-11/23/12

A closer look at the top spenders' Black Friday-specific TV ad spend as compared to their total spend (not limited to Black Friday ads) for the 11/5-11/23 2012 period unveils some big differences in ad strategy. While Ford dedicated only 6% of its TV ad expenditures to Black Friday-specific spots during this period, 95% of HHGregg's ads were dedicated to Black Friday. Meanwhile, Target devoted far more of its ad spend to Black Friday; less than half (45%) of Walmart's TV budget was spent on Black Friday messaging, compared to 67% for Target.

While promotional ads and coupons are not used in every category, there are a number of top brands that did take advantage of this channel to promote Black Friday. Target started its Black Friday promo advertising with \$11.3 million in spend the week beginning on 11/12/12. In comparison, though Walmart only spent \$5.8 million that week, it spent more than any other retailer in promo spend during the weeks of Black Friday—investing \$17.7 million in promotional ads during the week beginning on 11/19—while Target came in at number two with \$10.1 million in promotional expenditure. Walmart focused its promotional deals on toys, electronics, video games, and household furnishings. Target also had deals in electronics, video games, and household furnishings, but it also ran deals for cameras, apparel, and arts and crafts products.

WALMART FSI WEEK BEGINNING ON 11/12/12



Despite being highly promoted, toys and electronics were not the most popular items among shoppers last year. Instead, apparel was the most shopped-for category during Black Friday in 2012, with 58% of shoppers buying clothing and clothing accessories. Next in popularity were books, CDs, DVDs, and video games (bought by 40% of shoppers), electronics (38%), toys (35%) and jewelry (15%) – all common options for gifts (whether for friends and loved ones or oneself), according to the NRF survey.

FROM A TIME TO SHOP TO AN ACTUAL HOLIDAY

Kantar Media mined our AdScope creative database to identify creative similarities in leading 2012 Black Friday ads. Campaigns for Walmart and Target (the two biggest spenders) shared some key characteristics: a large proportion of Spanish-language ads; the role of smart phones in the purchase process; and the treatment of Black Friday as a holiday in and of itself to prepare and gear up for. This Target ad shows two teens texting to coordinate Black Friday shopping plans, perhaps a reflection of the NRF survey findings that the percentage of consumers who used mobile devices to visit retailer websites in 2012 reached 28%, up from 18% in 2011.

Target's 2012 Black Friday campaign featured three core ads, adapted to Spanish-language and different ad lengths (15 and 30 seconds), totaling six different ads. Walmart took a different approach by airing a series of 20+ ads, most of which were only 15 seconds long. Two out of three of Target's ads featured a woman Black Friday planning and shopping solo, while Walmart's creative approach portrayed the sales event as a meaningful experience for shoppers to do as a family. The Walmart ads below depict couples reveling in the shopping experience together.

TARGET TV AD



WALMART TV ADS



While the winter holiday season may now stretch from September to the New Year, Black Friday remains constrained to the weekend after Thanksgiving and is promoted as an event. As a result, retailers must focus their advertising efforts within the few weeks prior to Black Friday, leading to lots of spend compressed into a short period of time.

Mass merchandisers, department stores and electronics retailers are among the top spenders, with Walmart and Target alone spending over \$40 million just on TV ads during November 2012. Interestingly, some less-typical advertisers such as auto dealers have started to join the Black Friday party, hoping to take advantage of a time when many consumers are off work and primed to spend. Given the tough competition during the Black Friday period, this strategy may not be the most cost-effective. While Black Friday may offer tons of deals for shoppers, this prime advertising season is no bargain for retailers. But with billions in sales at stake, major retailers simply can't afford to opt out of the Black Friday fray.

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Kantar Media provides critical information that helps our clients make better decisions about communications. We enable the world's leading brands, publishers, agencies and industry bodies to navigate and succeed in a rapidly evolving media industry. Our services include analysis of paid media opportunities; counsel on brand reputation, corporate management and consumer engagement through owned media; and evaluating consumers' reactions in earned media. As the global house of expertise in media and marketing information, Kantar Media provides clients with a broad range of insights, from audience research, competitive intelligence, vital consumer behaviour and digital insights, to marketing effectiveness and social media monitoring. Our experts currently work with 22,000 companies tracking 4 million brands in 50 countries.

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Our analysis of Black Friday ad trends is based on our AdScope monitoring of the multimedia marketplace. Our scope extends beyond Black Friday, so if you would like to know more about how a particular category, brand, or messaging is faring across the entire media mix, we can provide actionable insights based on our broad range of solutions.

Please contact:

Andrew Hogan

Senior Account Service Representative, AdScope
Kantar Media Ad Intelligence
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video killed the star

Hulu No Longer Playing Catch-Up with Slate of Original Programming for 2014

Posted by [Sheila Shayon](#) on January 9, 2014 05:55 PM

Hulu has used the massive CES 2014 stage to tout its five million subscribers, over \$1 billion in revenue, and its exciting new lineup of original programming and returning series on the video platform. The company announced new shoes, including *Reaper* and *Happy Endings*, as well as returning favorites including Seth Meyers' *The Awesomes* and Chris O'Dowd's *Moone Boy*.



"I think the last year was a very solid foundation for us to continue to build our original business upon," said Charlotte Koh, Hulu's head of original programming development. "We're very aware that a lot of our evolution is about moving from a catch-up platform to being a first-run window of exclusive content. The slate that you're seeing for 2014 reflects the growing profile of the company."

That evolution will put Hulu back in line with competitors like [Netflix](#) and Amazon Prime Instant Video, both who have developed multiple successful [original series](#). New series include *Deadbeat*, a 10-episode supernatural comedy from Brad Pitt's production company Plan B and Wilfred writers Cody Heller and Brett Konner, premiering April 9. *Deadbeat* follows "the genre reinvention angle we look for," Koh said, combining "supernatural, comedy and buddy elements in a cocktail." [Continue reading...](#)

More about: [Media](#), [TV](#), [Streaming](#), [Video](#), [Hulu](#), [Netflix](#), [Amazon Prime Instant Video](#), [HBO Go](#), [Original Content](#), [CES](#), [CES 2014](#)

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brand battle

T-Mobile Jumps Ahead of AT&T in Mobile Race After CES Spectacle

Posted by [Mark J. Miller](#) on January 9, 2014 04:46 PM

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While this year's [Consumer Electronics Show](#) has yet to produce any big fireworks on the [product front](#), it has held a significant role in [adding fuel](#) to the raging fire between AT&T and T-Mobile.

In a battle that started months ago, with mobile carriers AT&T, T-Mobile, Sprint and Verizon trying to one-up each other's best offer, it seems two have developed a particularly sour taste for one another. T-Mobile, the underdog in the tussle, has taken a no-holds-barred approach to building its customer base, from [cutting out contracts](#) and [data limits](#) to all-out bribery. But being competitive in the market means everyone else has to [play that game](#), too.

And so last week, AT&T announced that it [would pay up to \\$450](#) for customers to switch from T-Mobile to their service, including up to \$250 in turn-in credit for their old phone and \$200 per line.

The move no doubt would inspire a counter-offer from T-Mobile—and it did. [Continue reading...](#)

More about: [Mobile](#), [T-Mobile](#), [AT&T](#), [Verizon Wireless](#), [Sprint](#), [Mobile Plans](#), [Data](#), [Smartphone](#), [Tech](#), [CES](#), [CES 2014](#), [John Legere](#), [Social Media](#), [Twitter](#), [Advertising](#)



rebranding

A&E Takes the Road Less Traveled with New 'Be Original' Rebrand

Posted by [Mark J. Miller](#) on January 9, 2014 03:47 PM



Anyone who has watched an episode of *Duck Dynasty* on A&E knows they don't give three beignets about pretty much what anybody else thinks. They pride themselves on being renegades of sorts, truly originals.

Now A&E has decided to follow suit. When the cable network launched back in 1984 as The Arts and Entertainment Network, its executives surely didn't dream of a day when its lineup had such titles as *Duck Dynasty*, *Bates Motel*, and *Storage Wars*. But these are the shows that are drawing eyeballs today—the most in the industry, in some cases—and what TV exec doesn't like that?

To cater to its new tenants, the channel is [moving away](#) from its "Real. Life. Drama" tagline to "Be Original" and is emphasizing it by only running original programming in prime-time. [Continue reading...](#)

More about: [Media, US, TV, A&E, Taglines, Rebranding, Duck Dynasty, Be Original, Original Programming, Original Content, Advertising, Brand Identity, Visual Identity](#)



chew on this

CPG Brands Whack Calories, But Some Critics Won't Give Them Their Due

Posted by Dale Buss on January 9, 2014 02:58 PM

The advertisement features a red background with the text "nutrition: connection" at the top left. Below it, a list of topics includes "bone health | hydration | dental health | energy balance | caffeine | carbonation | sweeteners". The main headline reads "where label meets lifestyle". To the right, three boxes labeled "think", "drink", and "move" contain messages about making sensible choices, product variety, and physical activity. A large Coca-Cola bottle is on the right, and a row of various beverage bottles is at the bottom. A search bar at the bottom left says "search products for nutrition info".

Apparently you're damned if you do, and you're damned if you don't—at least if you're a consumer packaged goods company. That's one of the big lessons of the reaction to this week's [announcement](#) that CPG companies have more than [quadrupled the goal](#) in their pledge to

reduce the total calories contained in their products over the last five years.

Critics quickly wondered whether the companies should be getting credit, or just American consumers who've been making "better" eating choices. But more on that later.

The total calories in products sold by 16 of the nation's largest food and beverage companies—ranging from Coca-Cola to PepsiCo, General Mills to Kellogg, Kraft to Nestle —dropped by 6.4 trillion from 2007 through 2012, according to an independent evaluation funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. [Continue reading...](#)

More about: [CPG](#), [Center for Science in the Public Interest](#), [Coca-Cola](#), [General Mills](#), [Kellogg](#), [Kraft](#), [Nestle](#), [Obesity](#), [PepsiCo](#), [Margo Wootan](#), [Health](#)

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retail watch

Macy's Tidies Up After Holidays, But No One's Sure What JCPenney is Up To

Posted by [Dale Buss](#) on January 9, 2014 01:47 PM

Some major retailers are still singing the holiday blues off of a somewhat-disappointing holiday shopping season. Macy's plans to [lay off](#) 2,500 workers and close a scattering of stores, while JCPenney has [hinted to investors](#) and other constituencies that it may not have bounced back during the season as much as had been hoped.

Macy's said its [cutbacks](#) are part of a new \$100 million cost-shaving plan. But in the big picture, Macy's moves don't seem to reflect bleakness. They involve closing five stores but also opening five new stores, plus three Bloomingdale's stores. And Macy's said its net payrolls would stay about the same, at about 175,000 employees, because it will be hiring more people in areas such as online operations.

Also, [Macy's moves](#) come after a decent 3.6 percent jump in comp-store sales for the November-December holiday shopping season compared with a year earlier. Investors on Wednesday and Thursday bid up Macy's shares. [Continue reading...](#)

More about: [Retail](#), [JCPenney](#), [Ron Johnson](#), [Macy's](#), [Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia](#), [Sterne Agee](#), [Myron Ullman](#), [Holiday Shopping](#)



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Wonderful Pistachios Devises New Game Plan to Stretch Colbert's Super Bowl Spots

Posted by [Dale Buss](#) on January 9, 2014 12:52 PM



Having used its Super Bowl ad last year featuring Psy to help establish itself as a clear threat to some established salty-snacks brands, Wonderful Pistachio plans to up the ante in this year's game with two commercials featuring a different kind of star: [Stephen Colbert](#).

In the meantime, Wonderful continues to broaden its marketing footprint through its two-year-old partnership with the Harlem Globetrotters. That has included a TV-ad appearance by the team, similar to those by Psy and other celebrities, as well as in-arena promotions such as shooting contests during the games.

"We want to make sure we reach consumers who haven't tried [Wonderful Pistachios] and build a relationship with them," Marc Seguin, Paramount Farms' CMO, told [brandchannel](#). [Continue reading...](#)

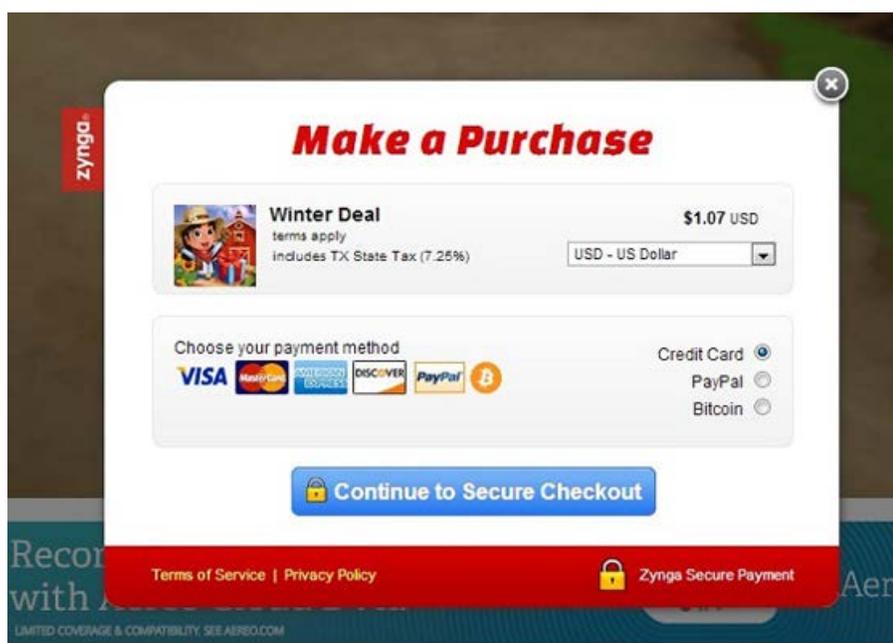
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rising brands

Bitcoin Gets Its Game On as Bankers Grapple with Growing Popularity

Posted by [Sheila Shayon](#) on January 9, 2014 11:47 AM



What does it take for a virtual currency that exists as software, is not controlled by any country or banking authority (and still eschewed by many), to hit mainstream adoption? Gaming.

Zynga recently announced it is testing Bitcoin payment in seven of its games, causing prices to surge to \$1,000 on the Mt. Gox exchange.

Zynga published the announcement exclusively on [Reddit](#), saying, "We wanted to share with the r/bitcoin community that Zynga Inc. is now conducting a Bitcoin test with [BitPay](#), a leading Bitcoin service provider, in select Zynga.com web games." The Bitcoin test is only available to Zynga users playing FarmVille 2, CastleVille, ChefVille, CoasterVille, Hidden Chronicles, Hidden Shadows and CityVille.

Created by Satoshi Nakamoto in 2008, [Bitcoin](#) crossed the \$1,000 threshold in November, but plummeted to \$640 as China stopped accepting deposits, disturbed by its sweeping popularity and reports of money laundering. But since then, merchants accepting Bitcoins for a wide range of purchases from Gummi bears to smartphones have boosted its value. [Continue reading...](#)

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brand partners

FSU Basks in National Championship Glory with Coke

Posted by [Mark J. Miller](#) on January 9, 2014 10:45 AM



Florida State fans have been celebrating since the university's football team secured the national championship on Monday and found a thrilling way to cap off an undefeated season, coming from behind to finish off the Auburn Tigers 34-31 with a two-yard touchdown pass with 13 seconds to go.

Not to lose celebratory steam, Coca-Cola has unveiled its limited-edition Coke and Coke Zero 12 oz. cans that feature FSU's logo and acknowledgement that the team is tops in the nation. There aren't too many of these cans headed to Alabama, surely. [Continue reading...](#)

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November 26th, 2013
12:00 PM ET

Challah stuffing for Thanksgiving mash-up

In case you've been living under Plymouth Rock, **Thanksgivukkah**, the **hybrid word du jour** references the unlikely convergence of the Thanksgiving and Hanukkah holidays.

Such a calendar occurrence won't happen again for approximately 70,000 years, so professional and home cooks alike have crossbred the respective culinary traditions with the fervor of 1,000 turduckens.

One such mash-up from Tori Avey, who blogs as **The Shiksa in the Kitchen**, is a savory challah stuffing recipe - and for that, we're thankful.

Savory Challah Stuffing

Serves 10-12

Recipe reprinted with permission from **The Shiksa in the Kitchen**

Kosher Key: Meat or Pareve depending on oil/broth used

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- 1 cup pre-shelled roasted chestnuts or 3/4 lb. chestnuts in shell
- 1/4 cup schmaltz or margarine, divided (if you're not keeping kosher, feel free to use butter)
- 1/2 lb. (8 oz.) sliced white mushrooms
- 1 onion, minced
- 2 cups celery, diced including leaves
- 1 cup carrots, diced small
- 1/2 cup curly leaf parsley, minced
- 2 Tbsp fresh sage, minced
- 1 Tbsp fresh thyme leaves, minced
- 1 tsp fresh marjoram, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 quart (4 cups) chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 medium loaf of dairy-free challah bread, cubed (about 10 cups of cubes)
- 4 eggs, beaten

If you are using pre-peeled chestnuts, chop them into bits and reserve them in a bowl for later use. If you are using chestnuts in the shell, you will need to roast and peel them before chopping - in my experience this takes about 45 minutes of prep time.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. In a skillet, melt 2 tablespoons schmaltz or margarine over medium high heat, tilting to coat the bottom of the pan. Spread the mushrooms in a single layer at the bottom of the skillet. Sprinkle them with salt and pepper and turn the heat to high. Let the mushrooms sear without stirring. After 2 minutes, stir the mushrooms continuously for another 2-3 minutes until they are seared golden brown and shrink to half their size.

Reserve the mushrooms in a bowl, return skillet to the stove. Turn flame to medium high and melt 2 more tablespoons of schmaltz or margarine in the skillet. Sauté the onion till it softens, then add the celery, carrots, minced garlic cloves and chopped chestnuts. Sauté mixture for 5 minutes until veggies begin to brown and caramelize. Stir in the seared mushrooms, parsley and herbs.

Pour in 3 cups of the chicken or veggie broth (reserve the last cup), bring to a boil. Reduce heat and allow mixture to simmer for 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Remove from heat and let the mixture cool for a few minutes.

Meanwhile, spread challah bread cubes in a single layer across two cookie sheets and place them in the oven. Let them lightly toast for 5-6 minutes until the edges start to turn golden. You want to dry out the cubes just slightly; they should still retain some of their sponginess.

Place challah bread crumbs in a very large mixing bowl. In a small bowl, beat the eggs. Pour the eggs over the breadcrumbs, stir with a large wooden spoon or spatula. Add the broth mixture and continue to stir till the vegetables and liquid are fully incorporated into the breadcrumbs.

You can use this stuffing to stuff a 10-16 lb. bird, or you can bake the stuffing separately. If stuffing the bird, make sure you follow the appropriate food safety guidelines.

To bake the stuffing outside the bird, spread the stuffing in an even layer in a 9x13 baking dish and place uncovered in the oven. Let it cook for 30-45 minutes. Check once halfway through cooking; if the stuffing seems too dry, pour more chicken broth

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November 2013

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

evenly across the top. Let it continue to bake till the top turns golden brown.

Serve hot. To keep this dish vegetarian, use vegetable broth and butter or margarine.

Explore more Thanksgiving recipes from *Tori Avey*:



[Sweet Potato Latkes with Brown Sugar Syrup & Candied Pecans](#)
[Rum Raisin Cranberry Kugel](#)

Or, see all of Eatocracy's best **Thanksgiving recipes and advice**.

Posted by: **Sarah LeTrent** -- Eatocracy associate editor

Filed under: **Hanukkah • Holiday • Jewish • Recipes • Thanksgiving • Thanksgiving**

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"Cook" at what temperature? When to the herbs factor in? Why is this the most poorly written recipe ever?

November 27, 2013 at 8:02 pm | [Reply](#)

Dan

The recipe says to preheat oven at 350 degrees and cook for 35-40 minutes, don't know how you missed that. Assuming the herbs go in with the vegetables when everything is stirred together.

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Holiday Windows 2013

"We're drawn to extremes here. Minimalism is great. Maximalism is, too. What we avoid is medium-ism." - David Hoey

Hot Shop

The Brooklyn Brothers: Creative Conductors of Viral Goodness

Inspiration Board

From Allstate's Home Decorator to the Festive Funk Machine to the Coke Sweater Generator, here's a little creative inspiration for the end of the year.

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A round-up of the best viral ads and trends of 2013

November 2013

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December 2013



HOLIDAY WINDOWS

There's nothing that quite matches the excitement of walking down 5th Avenue in New York City to see what retailers have dreamed up for their magical holiday window displays.

The master of window presentation design & CLIO Image Design Juror David Hoey once said, "We're drawn to extremes here. Minimalism is great. Maximalism is, too. What we avoid is medium-ism."

While not all window displays avoid "medium-ism," below are a few of this year's best, hailing from New York & London.

Happy Holidays!

Bergdorf Goodman: Holidays on Ice



"We sought a deceptively simple theme, and added a surprise. "Holidays on Ice" will give equal billing to a year's worth of holidays—not only the wintry ones. *All* of them will be icebound. Even the Fourth of July." - David Hoey, Senior Director of Visual Presentation, Bergdorf Goodman.

Bloomingdale's: All Wrapped Up In



Bloomingdales embraces holiday shopping all around the world with this year's theme, "All Wrapped Up In"

Design by: [Spaeth Design](#)





For the first time, Bergdorf Goodman revealed their windows with a sidewalk spectacular on November 19th at the corner of Fifth Avenue & 58th Street. Bravo TV host Andy Cohen and acrobatic dancers from the Streb Extreme Action Company were featured special guests.
**Photography Credit: Ricky Zehavi*



Saks Fifth Avenue: The Legend of the Saks Yeti



Bergdorf's wasn't the only retailer that put on a show this year. Saks Fifth Avenue put on a 3D light show to go along with their Abominable Snowman-themed windows.

Ted Baker: Merry Kissmas

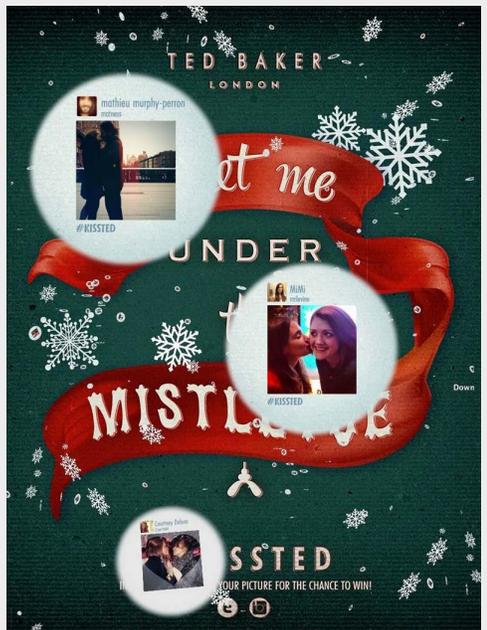


British retailer Ted Baker brings back the "Kiss Me Under the Mistletoe" tradition with a little help from Tangible Interactions' Social Mosa digital installation.

SAKS FIFTH AVENUE: HOLIDAY WINDOWS



Debut night was filled with a live performances including Grammy Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell, singer Frankie Moreno, the Young People's Chorus of NYC and the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School at American Ballet Theatre.



Ted Baker encouraged couples from around the world to come by their stores and tweet/Instagram selfies kissing under the mistletoe using the hashtag #KissTed for a chance to win a romantic holiday for two. The photos would instantly appear in window display once tagged.

2013 Saks Fifth Avenue Holiday 3D Light Show



Tiffany & Co.: Snowy New York Streets

Selfridges: The Destination Christmas Windows



The product takes front and center for the Selfridges windows this year. Maybe Santa will grant someone's wish this year. ;)



Selfridges also paired with Kids Company this year to raise money for vulnerable children and young people.

Fenwick: Enchanted Forest



Explore the enchanted forest at Fenwick's, featuring Hansel & Gretel, Jack Frost and the Snow Queen.

Designed by One World Studio GmbH



Quiet. Proud. Calm.

Holly Golightly would definitely love these Tiffany & Co. windows.

Cartier



This Cartier interactive display was actually created in 2012, but it was too special to leave out.

Designed by Zigelbaum + Coelho



Barney's New York: BNYNYCSCC



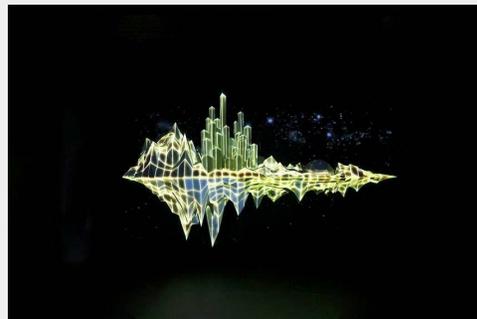
Barney's New York collaborated with Jay-Z to showcase a limited edition collection. 100% of sales will be donated to the Shawn Carter Foundation, a charity dedicated to awarding post-secondary scholarships to students facing socio-economic hardships.



Harrods: The Harrods Christmas Express



As customers walk past the Harrods Christmas Express, they get to peek into individual carriages, each telling a different story.



Anya Hindmarch



How anyone is able to restrain themselves from knocking down the dominos in the Anya Hindmarch windows is beyond me. Enjoy!

Anya Hindmarch Seasons Greetings 2011





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AGENCIES, MUSIC!

Creature Trades Beef for Beats at Vinyl Storefront

By Jordan Teicher on December 13, 2013 2:35 PM



Today, Seattle-based agency Creature (they of [recent storefront fame](#)) opened a vinyl record shop in their ever-changing office window where customers can buy records by the pound. It's a call back to nostalgia for family-run butcher shops and the original small business. You even buy your records out of a deli case and take them home wrapped in butcher paper. The first person to conduct business in Elpee's Beat Shop bought 10 pounds worth of music. Thankfully, at \$1.46 per pound, 10 pounds of "Choice Cuts" records costs much less than 10 pounds of tender ribeye. For the thriftier shoppers, there's always the "Prime Beats" quality of vinyl selling for \$1.03 per pound.

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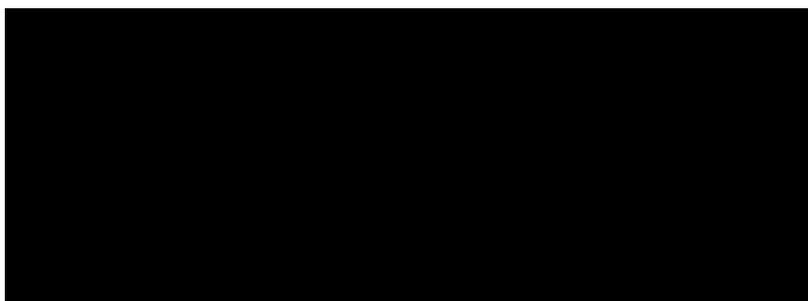


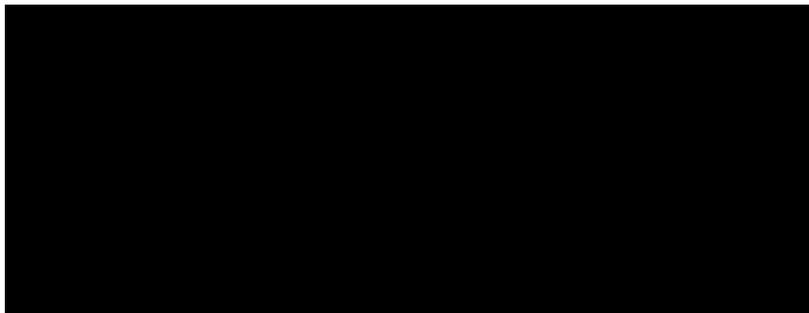
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The storefront, with all of it's Seattle-y charm, will be open weekdays throughout the holiday season as well as the occasional weekend. I'm not sure what kind of records you can buy – one of the press photos shows off a cutely tattered **Nat King Cole** album – but for a place rooted in music history, I'm hoping there's plenty of variety. As of the opening, Creature promised 1,000 albums for sale. And if seeing all the butcher paraphernalia makes you hungry, there's always Meat Loaf.

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What is this?



HOLIDAY HOT SHEET

DECEMBER 11, 2013

2013 Holiday Hot Sheet: Weekly insights for the holiday marketer

As marketers seek to connect with their customers during the largest consumer spending season of the year, Experian Marketing Services presents our Holiday Hot Sheet series to provide a weekly recap of trends for the 2013 holiday season: How consumers are shopping, what they are searching for, and how marketing campaigns can be optimized to maximize rewards for both consumers and brands.

What's hot this week:

- Department stores, electronics and video game stores experienced peak online traffic on Thanksgiving while softer categories like apparel peaked on Cyber Monday.
- Social networking and email sites are driving a greater share of traffic to retail sites this year.
- Year-over-year email revenue went up by 12 percent for peak shopping days. Black Friday was a particularly strong day for email with a 17 percent increase in volume and a 45 percent increase in revenue for that day.
- Free shipping is becoming more important as the holiday approaches. 20 percent of all emails with offers in their subject lines mentioned free shipping during the past week.

Email by the numbers

Email volume

The high volume increases this week are due to the inclusion of Cyber Monday, which occurred one week later this year than in 2012.

Email volume variance: 2013 compared to 2012

Industry	YOY by week: 12/1 - 12/7	Season-to-date 09/29 - 12/7
All industry	27.5%	11.6%
Business products and services	18.5%	-12.1%
Catalogers	39.6%	39.6%
Consumer products and services	36.3%	6.1%
Media and entertainment	4.3%	9.2%
Multi-channel retailers	25.9%	8.1%
Publishers	11.9%	14.6%
Travel	-15.5%	-0.6%

Email performance metrics

Open rates and average order values continue to be close to matching those seen in 2012. Multi-channel retailers are matching last season's performance metrics in spite of the volume increase for this vertical.

Season-to-date email performance variances: (09/29 - 12/7/2013 compared to 2012)

Industry	Unique opens variance	Unique clicks variance	Trans variance	Rev per eml variance	Avg order variance
All industry	2.0%	-7.7%	-16.8%	-6.9%	1.3%
Business products and services	2.9%	-5.2%	-0.7%	-13.4%	-35.0%
Catalogers	1.7%	-10.1%	-29.2%	-22.0%	0.9%
Consumer products and services	-4.4%	-20.8%	-37.4%	-25.2%	13.9%
Media and entertainment	-3.1%	-22.3%			
Multi-channel retailers	5.6%	-5.2%	-4.3%	0.7%	1.7%
Publishers	3.8%	14.6%			
Travel	4.1%	-5.4%			

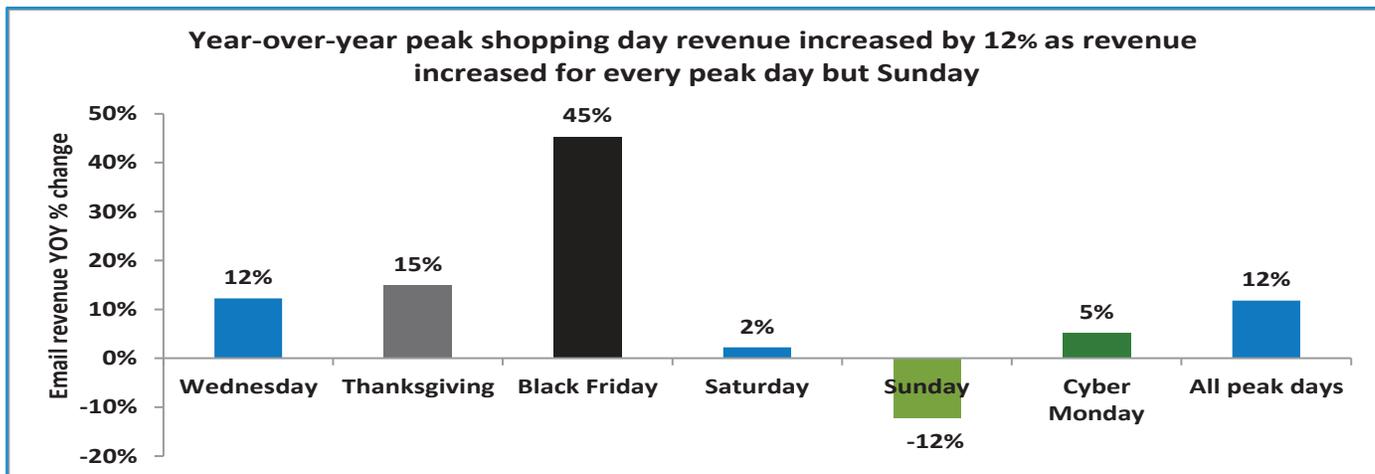
Season-to-date email performance metrics: (09/29 - 12/7/2013 compared to 2012)

Industry	Unique opens 2012	Unique opens 2013	Unique clicks 2012	Unique clicks 2013	Transaction rates 2012	Transaction rates 2013	Rev per eml 2012	Rev per eml 2013	Avg order 2012	Avg order 2013
All industry	15.4%	15.7%	2.3%	2.1%	0.07%	0.06%	\$0.08	\$0.08	\$174	\$176
Business products & services	13.2%	13.6%	1.7%	1.6%	0.03%	0.03%	\$0.07	\$0.06	\$361	\$235
Catalogers	11.1%	11.3%	1.6%	1.5%	0.11%	0.08%	\$0.13	\$0.10	\$151	\$152
Consumer products & services	15.5%	14.8%	2.3%	1.8%	0.11%	0.07%	\$0.08	\$0.06	\$96	\$110
Media & entertainment	16.7%	16.2%	2.6%	2.0%						
Multi-channel retailers	14.8%	15.7%	2.4%	2.3%	0.05%	0.05%	\$0.09	\$0.09	\$192	\$195
Publishers	16.0%	16.6%	2.6%	2.9%						
Travel	19.0%	19.7%	2.6%	2.4%						

Email volume and performance metrics are based on analysis of 385 current brands that also mailed during the 2012 holiday season. All data is viewed at three days from sent.

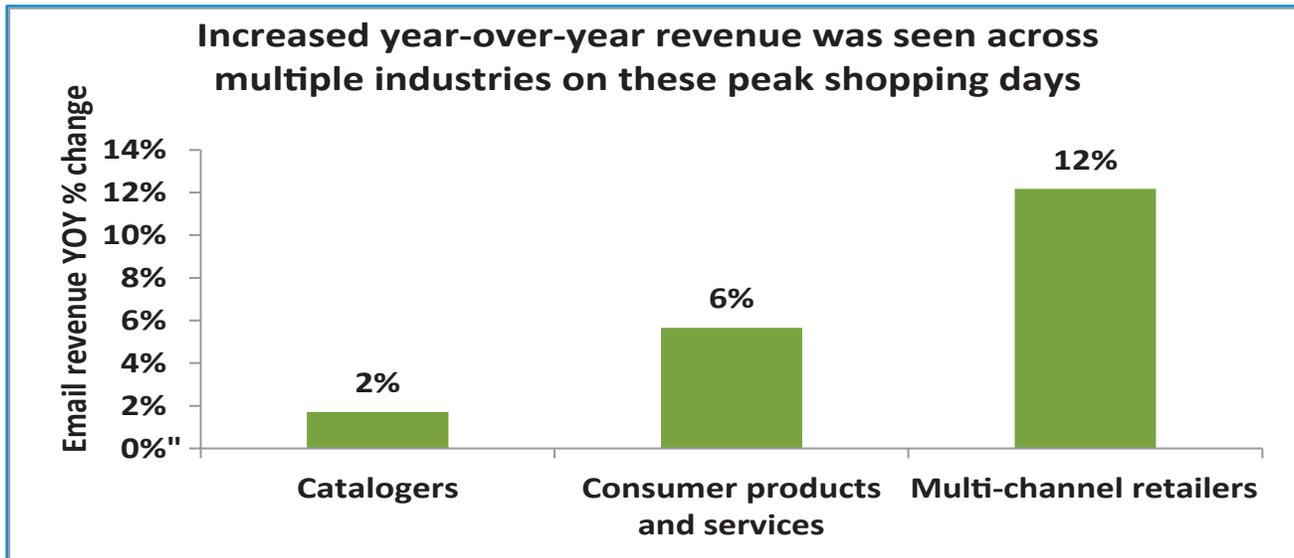
Email highlights and trends: Peak shopping days performance

While the number of transactions were down by 3.5 percent for the peak shopping days, overall revenue increased by 12 percent. Black Friday had a spectacular 45 percent increase in year-over-year revenue. It is likely that the closeness of Black Friday to Christmas this year boosted the sales for that day. Email revenue for apparel and accessories, shoes, and luxury products was particularly high on Black Friday.



Source: Experian Marketing Services

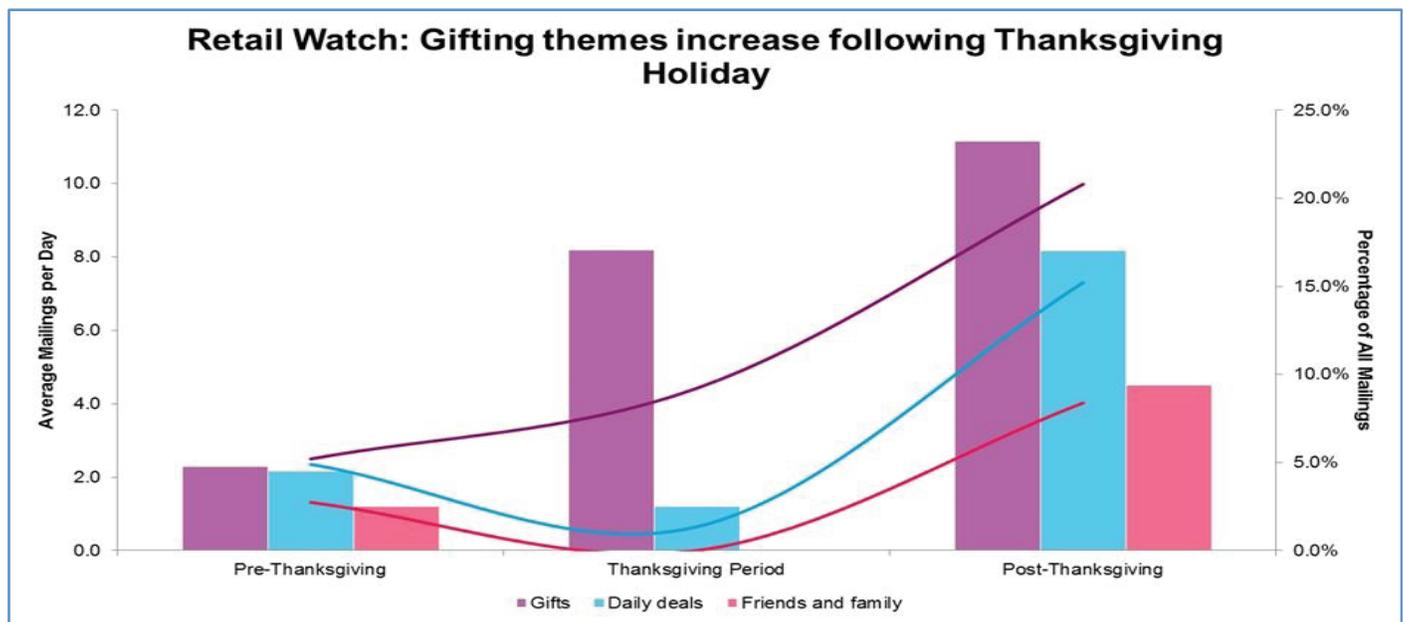
The three industries that are the most 'holiday' and gift-driven all had year-over-year increases in revenue for these peak days.



Source: Experian Marketing Services

Retail highlights

This week in our analysis of emails received from multi-channel retailers, we looked specifically at themes of emails during three time periods: Pre-Thanksgiving (9/29 to 11/27), Thanksgiving (11/27-12/2) and Post-Thanksgiving (12/3-12/8). The biggest shift observed was with emails featuring daily deals and friends and family offers, where the percentage of all mailings received jumped from 4.9 to 15.2 percent for daily deals and from 2.7 to 8.4 percent for friends and family emails. The percentage of emails with a gifting theme also changed significantly during the three time periods, going from 5.2 percent before Thanksgiving to almost 21 percent after Thanksgiving.

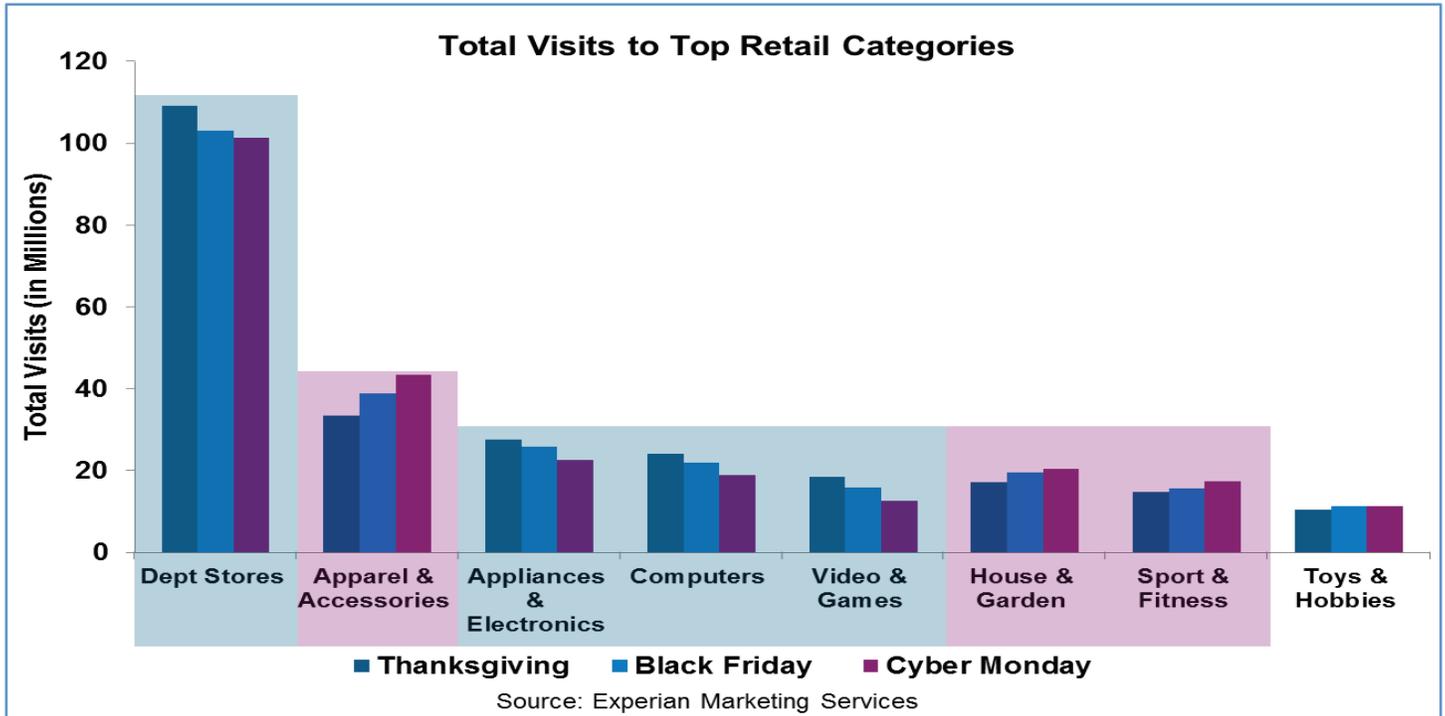


Source: Experian Marketing Services

Consumer insights

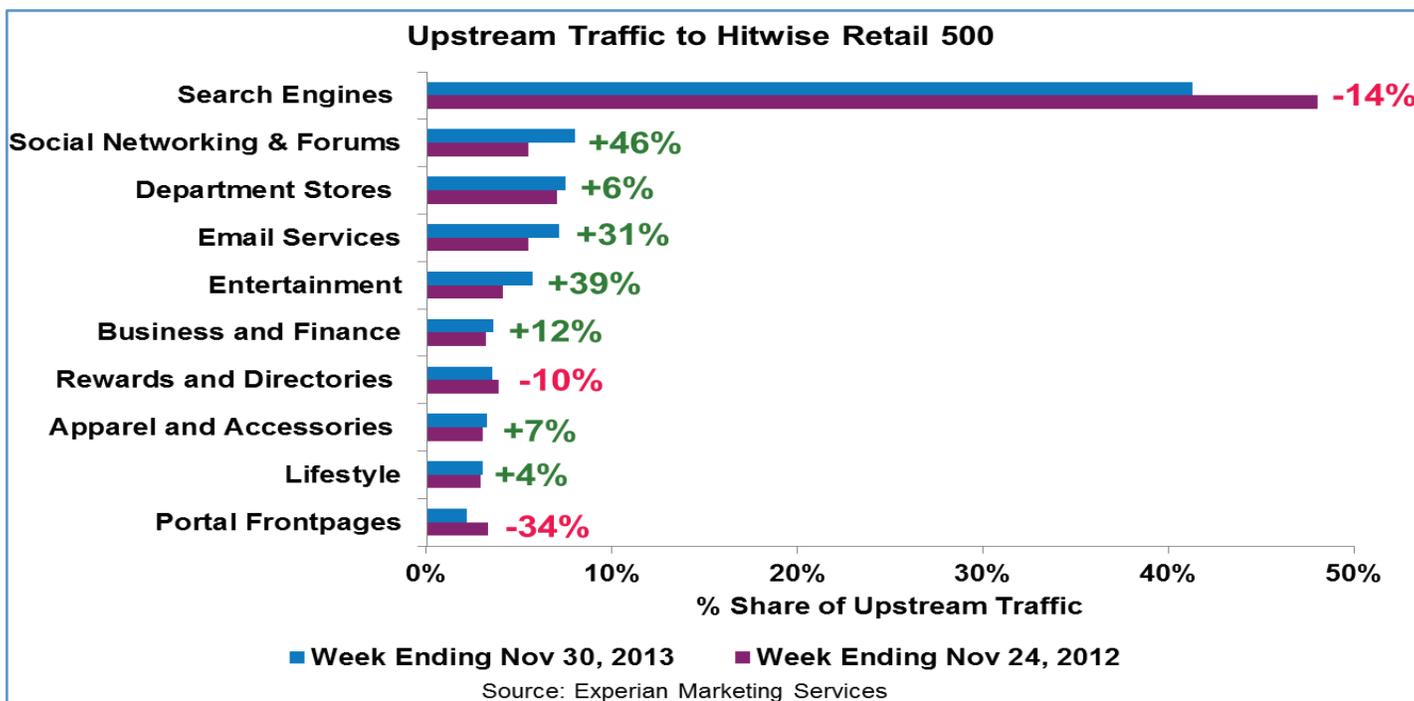
More insights from peak week

Last week, we reported that total visits across the three peak shopping days was even with total visits coming in at just over 190 million visits each day. This week, we're taking a closer look revealing that traffic was less consistent across Thanksgiving, Black Friday and Cyber Monday when we break things down by retail categories. For department stores, appliances/electronics retailers and computers/video game vendors, for instance, traffic was highest on Thanksgiving Day. Meantime, softer categories like apparel/accessories, house/garden and sports/fitness saw their visits peak on Cyber Monday.

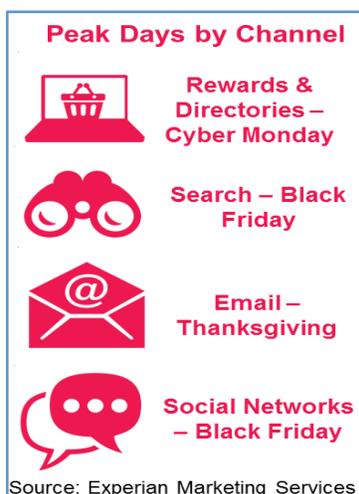


Key Traffic Drivers

This year we saw some interesting changes when it came to the sites driving traffic to the Hitwise® Retail 500 during peak week. Specifically, we saw the share of traffic coming from search engines this year fall by a relative 14 percent compared to 2012. At the same time, the share of traffic coming from social networking sites increased a relative 46 percent, confirming the increasing power of social in driving traffic. Email also increased as a driver of traffic by a relative 31 percent this year versus last.



On a related note, we reported in last week’s Holiday Hot Sheet that a record number of emails were sent on Thanksgiving this year with many promoting store openings on Thanksgiving with in-store and online offers. And it worked! When we examined the trends in downstream traffic to the Hitwise Retail 500, we found that Thanksgiving was the peak day for email instead of the typical Cyber Monday.



Before we move on to hot products, here's another note and tip regarding the use of social media. As mentioned previously, social sites drove a much greater share of traffic to retail sites this year and visual social sites like YouTube, Instagram and Tumblr are among those that increased their share the most. For example, visitors to Hitwise Retail 500 sites were three times more likely to have come directly from Instagram this year than they were in 2012. For retailers tired of using deals to lure shoppers, these visual social sites provide an alternative way to engage and connect with consumers that doesn't involve discounting.

Upstream Social Networking Websites visited before Hitwise Retail 500				
Rank	Websites	Week Ending Nov 30, 2013	Week Ending Nov 24, 2012	YoY Change
1	Facebook	5.07%	3.68%	38%
2	YouTube	1.89%	1.04%	82%
3	Pinterest	0.13%	0.11%	15%
4	Twitter	0.10%	0.08%	21%
5	Reddit	0.05%	0.01%	703%
6	Yahoo! Answers	0.05%	0.04%	7%
7	Linkedin	0.04%	0.03%	21%
8	Google+	0.04%	0.02%	124%
9	Instagram	0.03%	0.01%	311%
10	Tumblr	0.02%	0.01%	103%

Source: Experian Marketing Services

Hot products update

Uggs are back on top of the hot products list this week after being briefly ousted by the newly released Xbox and PlayStation gaming consoles. The top three hot products actually lost some of their heat though this week as shoppers expanded the scope of their holiday shopping to include new items like the Zoomer Robot Dog, which claimed the number six spot this week. The Zoomer Robot Dog is red hot with search clicks for the toy 21 times higher this week than last.

Other fast movers are the Furby Boom (the latest Furby) and the iPod 5th generation (the latest iPod Touch). Search clicks for the Furby Boom are more than double this week and the iPod 5th generation are more than triple this week compared to last.

The chart below shows the top 20 hot products that consumers want based on online searches for the week ending December 7, 2013 driving traffic to the Hitwise Retail 500, a grouping of the top online retail sites.

Hot Products: Overall		
Based on Search Clicks to the Hitwise® Retail 500		
Week Ending December 7, 2013		
Rank	Search Terms	Week over week relative difference
1	uggs	-11%
2	xbox one	-39%
3	ps4	-36%
4	kindle fire hd	67%
5	ipad air	46%
6	zoomer robot dog	2151%
7	fitbit	29%
8	chromecast	53%
9	furby boom	138%
10	barbie dream house	53%
11	doc mcstuffins check up center	55%
12	rainbow loom	-3%
13	iphone 5s	-27%
14	doc mcstuffins	24%
15	ipod touch 4th generation	52%
16	disney infinity	61%
17	ipod 5th generation	212%
18	microsoft surface	-37%
19	kindle fire hdx	22%
20	nabi 2	55%

Source: Experian Marketing Services

Hot toys update

Lots of new toys showed up on the hot toy list. In fact, half of the items on the list this week weren't even registering a week ago. Among the top newcomers are the previously mentioned Zoomer Robot Dog, Glitzi Globes (a DIY snow globe kit) and the RipStick (a caster board made by Razor, the popular scooter maker).

Video game consoles and games still dominate the list with the three top ranked products falling into this category. While the Xbox One and PlayStation 4 have fallen or remained flat, other gaming products are heating up, including the Disney Infinity (up 48 percent week over week) and the Disney Infinity starter pack for Xbox (up 164 percent week over week). Skylanders SWAP Force (up 40 percent week over week) and the first game in the Skylanders series, Skylanders Spyro's Adventure, which made the list for the first time this week.

The chart below shows the 20 most searched for toys and games based on search clicks to Toys 'R' Us – USA.

Hot Products: Toys		
Based on Search Clicks to Toys 'R' Us USA Week Ending December 07, 2013		
Rank	Search Terms	Week over Week relative difference
1	xbox one	-21%
2	ps4	1%
3	disney infinity	48%
4	doc mcstuffins check up center	45%
5	zoomer robot dog	New
6	skylanders swap force	40%
7	furby boom	72%
8	glitzi globes	New
9	ripstik	New
10	barbie dream house	-35%
11	samsung galaxy tablet	189%
12	disney infinity starter pack xbox 360	164%
13	minion toys	New
14	ipod 5 cases	New
15	xo tablet	New
16	lego monster fighters	New
17	sofia the first	28%
18	wwe 2k14	New
19	skylanders spyro's adventure	New
20	nintendo 3ds xl	New

Source: Experian Marketing Services

Tech Junkies update

This week, Tech Junkies, those consumers who visit technology review websites and technology content sites, are on the hunt for a new camera with searches for the Nikon Coolpix P7800 topping the list. Two other cameras, the Canon Vixia HF R400 camcorder and the Nikon D5300, also earned a spot this week. As usual, Tech Junkies are fairly average relative to the average online adult when it comes to their enthusiasm for most Apple products. In fact, Tech Junkies were no more likely to search for the new iPad Air than average.

The chart below shows the top 10 electronics products searched for by Tech Junkies. The right-hand column shows the relative difference between Tech Junkies and the online population using each search term.

Hot Products: Tech Junkies		
Based on Tech Junkies Search Clicks to Electronics Retailers Week Ending December 30, 2013		
Rank	Search Term	Relative Difference
1	nikon coolpix p7800	1087%
2	ipad air	0%
3	nook hd	626%
4	canon - vixia hf r400 hd	1087%
5	roku 2 xd	1087%
6	nikon d5300	1087%
7	ipad mini retina	391%
8	acer 17" i5	1087%
9	iphone 5s	11%
10	garmin etrex	1087%

Source: Experian Marketing Services

Top retailers update

Online shoppers were out in droves last week with total visits to the Hitwise Retail 500 reaching 897.9 million the week ending December 7, 2013, which included Cyber Monday. In fact, visits were up 8 percent year over year. The winners are the usual suspects: Amazon.com, Walmart, Target and Best Buy, which account for over a third of the total traffic to the Hitwise Retail 500. As most retailers' total visit numbers dropped this past week relative to the even busier Thanksgiving week, Amazon maintained 100% of the visits from the week prior, boosted perhaps by the news that the online mega retailer is exploring delivery by aerial drones. Shutterfly.com, which is heavily promoting their holiday cards and picture books, not only maintained visits, but grew them last week over the week prior. In the week ending December 7, the site registered 6.9 million visits, up from 5.4 million visits in the week ending November 30.

Top Visited Retail Sites				
Total Visits and Visit share to Hitwise Retail 500 – Week ending 12/7/2013				
Rank	Website	Domain	Visits Share	Total Visits
1	Amazon.com	www.amazon.com	24.15%	216,843,853
2	Walmart	www.walmart.com	7.63%	68,502,932
3	Target	www.target.com	3.71%	33,294,658
4	BestBuy	www.bestbuy.com	2.74%	24,583,495
5	Kohls.com	www.kohls.com	2.14%	19,231,610
6	Macy's	www.macys.com	1.99%	17,834,491
7	Sears	www.sears.com	1.59%	14,315,013
8	JC Penney	www.jcpenney.com	1.52%	13,692,403
9	Toys 'R' Us (US)	www.toysrus.com	1.37%	12,327,233
10	The Home Depot	www.homedepot.com	1.34%	11,997,619
11	QVC.com	www.qvc.com	1.15%	10,293,912
12	Overstock.com	www.overstock.com	1.03%	9,286,179
13	Kmart.com	www.kmart.com	0.99%	8,893,884
14	Lowe's	www.lowes.com	0.92%	8,278,206
15	Shutterfly	www.shutterfly.com	0.77%	6,940,483
16	HSN.com	www.hsn.com	0.71%	6,360,473
17	Zappos.com	www.zappos.com	0.65%	5,857,740
18	Cabela's	www.cabelas.com	0.64%	5,703,337
19	Barnes & Noble	www.barnesandnoble.com	0.63%	5,656,937
20	GameStop	www.gamestop.com	0.61%	5,511,507

Note - Data is from a custom category of 500 selected retail sites based on the Hitwise sample of 5 million monthly unique US Internet users.
Source: Experian Marketing Services

Stay up-to-date on your hot product news!

Visit and bookmark the page below for the latest trends on hot products this holiday season, as well as a list of the top 20 online retailers capturing the greatest share of visits to the Hitwise Retail 500. We'll update the content every Tuesday, so check back often! You can also browse through the hot products and top retailers from week's past on the site. Get your hot product news here:

<http://ex.pn/hhp>

Did you miss a Holiday Hot Sheet? Don't fear, you now can download past week's Hot Sheets online here: <http://ex.pn/193pUsr>

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BARRON'S INVESTMENT INSIGHT
Free People, Anthropologie Stores Fuel Urban Outfitters' Growth
Company Boasts Savvy Management, Increasing Earnings and a Strong Balance Sheet

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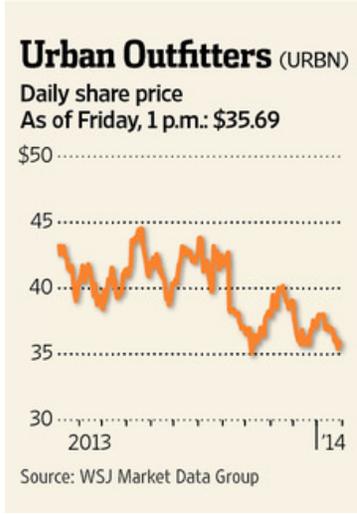
By SANDRA WARD
Feb. 1, 2014 8:22 p.m. ET

Always an upstart and maverick in the retail industry, [Urban Outfitters](#) **URBN -4.30%**, performance this past holiday season also made it stand out.

Its same-store sales rose a year-on-year 3% for the two months ended Dec. 31. That was a sharp contrast to many of its peers, which posted steep declines—especially those catering to fickle and fiscally challenged teens.

Yet, the gain was less than the 5% anticipated by Wall Street, and disappointed investors sold off the shares.

They focused on the 6% decline in same-store sales posted by the Philadelphia-based company's flagship chain, Urban Outfitters, which accounts for about 45% of overall sales.



While the company cited a difficult retailing environment for the sales slide, it mainly blamed its own fashion misses, narrow product offerings, and lack of a clear popular fashion trend, which prompted heavier-than-usual discounting. Rompers, jumpsuits and sweatshirt dresses didn't catch on among the college-age hipster crowd that Urban Outfitters targets.

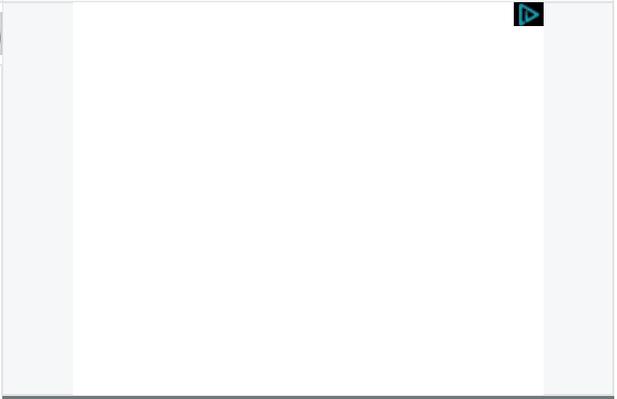
Still, in the rush to the exits, investors overlooked that same-store sales climbed 21% at Free People, Urban Outfitters' pricey bohemian-chic chain, which also boasts a wholesale business and accounts for roughly 14% of sales.

At Anthropologie, with its young-sophisticate offerings, same-store sales rose 11%.

Anthropologie comprises 40% of total sales.

Adding to the impressiveness of the results, both chains have pricier merchandise and engage in less discounting. Newer and smaller concept stores such as Terrain, a gardening and housewares retailer, and BHLDN, a specialty wedding retailer that's an extension of Anthropologie, round out sales.

At about \$35 a share, Urban Outfitters trades at 16.5 times projected earnings of \$2.14 for fiscal 2015 ending January, an enticing discount to the 20 times forward earnings it typically fetches. It continues to merit a premium to most retailers because of its savvy management, its consistency in increasing sales and earnings, and its strong balance sheet and cash flow.



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"I'm a fan, here," says Richard Jaffe, retail analyst at Stifel Nicolaus. "Urban remains a growth story...and there will be margin improvement."

Mr. Jaffe sees the stock rising to \$48 a share, or just under 22 times his 2015 estimate of \$2.24 a share, representing a possible gain of 37% as the company improves the merchandising at its core chain and as margins gain on fewer promotions.

Urban Outfitters' No. 1 priority, according to Chief Financial Officer Frank Conforti, is to "regain momentum at the Urban Outfitters' brand." Other companywide goals are to open new stores, boost online sales, launch a shoe line and expand its global presence.

"Please more customers" is a common Urban Outfitters' refrain. Expect investors to be pleased, and the stock to rise, if it meets its goals.

Sandra Ward is a senior editor for Barron's. For more stories, see barrons.com.

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Gregoire Abrial collected discarded furniture, transformed them, and offered them up gratis.



Like Like



Daniela Walker on December 4, 2013.
@emptyofpocket

French photographer and designer, [Grégoire Abrial](#) has lived and worked in New York City for five years. The artist is leaving the city, and as a thank you note for the years of inspiration, he gave New Yorkers a gift – upcycled furniture he found on the street.

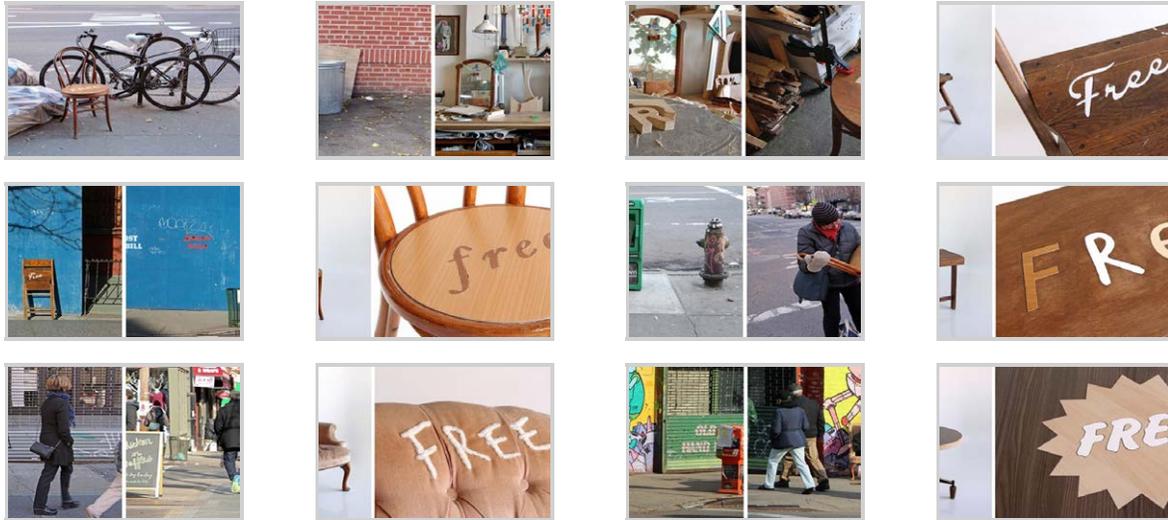
Throughout the years, Abrial collected discarded furniture and on Black Friday he put them out on the street. This time, channeling a sense of renewal, he fixed them up and added a special handmade note. He explains on his site:

I took inspiration from the crafts of marquetry and embroidery to embed on each of [the furniture] four letters: “FREE”. This word should first catch one’s attention and then its unique, hand-made expression would hopefully do the rest.

Abrial called the project, Bright Friday, the antithesis of the consumer holiday where people trample each other to buy new goods. He says:

Bright Friday tells the story of all of those items we are throwing away while other people might see them as small treasures.

Click the gallery below to see photographs of people enjoying Abrial's gift:



Grégoire Abrial

Source, images: [Designboom](#)

TOPICS: Arts & Culture

TAGS: Anti-Consumption, Black Friday, Gregoire Abrial, New York, Upcycling



Recent Articles By [Daniela Walker](#)

Daniela Walker is a regular contributor to PSFK. She is also a freelance writer and avid believer that a square (or two) of dark chocolate a day truly does keep the doctor away.

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From: [Bird, Jon](#)
To: [Martin, Laura-AUS](#)
Subject: FW: 10 Post Holiday Season Takeaways (USA) (Good One)
Date: Thursday, 9 January 2014 11:14:17 PM

For Holiday Wrap

From: <Kennedy>, Mary Alice <MaryAlice.Kennedy@yrgroup.com>
Date: Saturday, January 4, 2014 4:35 AM
To: David Roth <david@davidroth.com>, Jon Bird <Jon.Bird@ideaworks.com.au>, Gwen Morrison <gmorrison@wpp.com>
Cc: "Steinberg, Hillary" <Hillary.Steinberg@yrgroup.com>
Subject: 10 Post Holiday Season Takeaways (USA) (Good One)

[Retail](#)

Source: Time Magazine Jan 2 2014

10 Big Consumer Trends from the 2013 Holiday Shopping Season

By [Brad Tuttle @bradrtuttle](#) Jan. 02, 2014

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Kim Kyung-Hoon / Reuters

Now that the 2013 holiday shopping season is behind us, we can look back at the lessons that can be absorbed by [consumers](#) and [retailers](#) alike.

Here are 10 major consumer themes that were on display over the past few months:

Relentless expansion of the holiday season. Despite gripes about “Christmas creep,” holiday displays and promotions were [launched earlier than ever](#) this year. Kmart started airing its [first holiday commercial in early September](#), and many other retailers rolled out

[holiday promotions before summer](#) was officially over. The reason stores are pushing Christmas earlier and earlier is quite simple: The [competition for sales is fierce](#), and retailers want to beat their rivals to the punch to get those consumer dollars first. Retailers wanted to get the final holiday shopping dollars spent by consumers as well, and they employed [100+ consecutive hour shopping marathons](#) to woo insomniacs and other harried customers interested in completing their gift-buying lists in the middle of the night.

“Black Friday” up, Black Friday down. Heading into the holiday season, analysts stressed that the importance of traditional, in-person [Black Friday shopping was on the decline](#), and perhaps even facing extinction. Sure enough, most declared [Black Friday a flop](#), with the weekend experiencing the first year-over-year [spending decline](#) since 2009. Even so, retailers continued to rely on the term “Black Friday,” applying it to sales that surfaced a [week or more before Black Friday](#). And of course, tons of retailers launched their official [Black Friday sales on Thanksgiving Day](#), rather than bothering to wait for Friday. All of which factored in to a fairly [calm Black Friday 2013](#), when shoppers enjoyed a little extra elbow room, yet when stores wished for larger, more spend-happy crowds.

No true “it” toy. Despite the proliferation of [“hot” holiday toy lists](#), no single toy emerged as a must-have gift for kids. Among the reasons this was so: Increasingly, kids [want electronics](#) rather than traditional toys.

(**MORE:** [13 States Where You’ll Get Paid More Next Year](#))

Speaking of electronics—let’s hope you bought early. Over the years, many shopping experts have [questioned the wisdom of purchasing on Black Friday](#) or Cyber Monday. In many cases, the arguments (and much data) claim, the best prices for hot gift items aren’t to be had on these big shopping days. Adding fuel to the argument is a [study by Adgooroo](#), which shows that the average asking prices for many hot gadgets were significantly cheaper in early November than they were on Black Friday or Cyber Monday. [Apple’s iPad Mini](#), for instance, was being advertised for an average of \$284 around November 7, compared to \$302 on Black Friday and \$340 on Cyber Monday.

Price-matching: better for retailers than shoppers. The [expansion of price-matching policies](#) by Target, Best Buy, Toys R Us, Staples, and [Walmart \(even on some Black Friday specials\)](#) would seem to be a terrific development for consumers. And to some degree, the existence of such policies must force competitors to keep prices somewhat in line. But due to the typically long list of exceptions for price matches, and the extra steps required to get the lower price, only a small portion (perhaps 5%) of shoppers ever bother with price matching. “Most people think of it as a waste of time,” Edgar Dworsky, founder of [ConsumerWorld.org](#), told the [Minneapolis StarTribune](#). “It’s just for inveterate bargain hunters.” As a result, retailers get to appear like their prices are as low as anyone’s, which encourages shoppers to

make purchases without worry of a better price elsewhere, while the reality may be otherwise.

40% off? Meh. More so than ever, the idea of paying full price for anything seemed absurd this holiday season. “The deal is not so special anymore,” Alison Jatlow Levy, a retail strategist at consulting firm Kurt Salmon, explained to [USA Today](#). “The deal has become the norm. And if the deal is the norm ... it actually just trains the consumer to never buy at full price.” With more than a couple weeks before Christmas, nearly half of all shoppers said they were [waiting until the arrival of 70% off](#) sales before they’d buy.

More cyber spending. The [decline in shopping at the mall](#) was counterbalanced with the continued rise of e-retail purchases. Online sales got off to a great start for the holidays, with a [17% increase on Thanksgiving and Black Friday](#) compared to the year before. But things slowed down toward the end of the season, which, according to [comScore](#), saw an overall 10% increase in online sales over the 2012 season.

(**MORE:** [The Best of 2013 — Business Stories](#))

Late-season shipping fail. While there was some disappointment that the increase in holiday e-retail sales may not have met expectations, the 2013 holidays will be remembered for a different e-retail fail: Delays at UPS due to a [surge in purchases, bad weather](#), and other factors meant that many online purchases that were guaranteed to arrive by Christmas didn’t make it on time. Retailers whose customers were affected, including [Amazon and Kohl’s](#), offered gift cards and refunds of shipping and other costs, but plenty of shoppers were bitter that Christmas morning was spoiled. The feelings could affect shopper behavior—and the shipping contracts negotiated by e-retailers—for years to come.

The other big e-retail issue. In the quest for ever-increasing online sales, retailers pushed [fast, free shipping](#), competitive pricing, and easy return policies throughout the holidays. But the latter especially seems to be coming at a costly price for retailers’ bottom line. The [Wall Street Journal](#) reported that as many as [one-third of online purchases were returned](#), and that returns were expected to increase 15% for the 2013 holiday season.

Gift cards: because we don’t know what else to buy. Yet again, for the 2013 holiday season gift cards were the most requested gift item (wanted by 60% of consumers, per the [National Retail Federation](#)), and the most popular holiday gift to buy (the top choice in a [Nielsen survey](#)). Gift card sales were expected to hit an all-time high for the 2013 holiday season. And yet, as an [All Things D](#) post pointed out, [gift cards often go unspent](#) — or half-spent, with a nominal balance left on them for all of retail eternity.” Hence the existence of gift card exchange and resale sites, which promise to transform unused gift cards into cash. The only problem is that users inevitably get less cash than the value of the gift card. Perhaps one of these years consumers might reexamine the buying of gift cards and consider that it just

might be more sensible—and thoughtful—to just give cash in the first place.



[Brad Tuttle@bradrtuttle](#)

Brad Tuttle covers business and personal finance for TIME. He lives in Massachusetts with his wife and four sons, and also teaches journalism at [UMass-Amherst](#).

Read more: [10 Big Consumer Trends from the 2013 Holiday Shopping Season | TIME.com](http://business.time.com/2014/01/02/10-big-consumer-trends-from-the-2013-holiday-shopping-season/#ixzz2pMFFnEVY)<http://business.time.com/2014/01/02/10-big-consumer-trends-from-the-2013-holiday-shopping-season/#ixzz2pMFFnEVY>

From: [Bird, Jon](#)
To: [Martin, Laura-AUS](#)
Subject: FW: VML Daily Digisphere 12/02/2013: Cyber Monday
Date: Tuesday, 3 December 2013 11:19:35 AM

For Holiday Wrap

From: Ruth Hamilton <rhamilton@vml.com>
Date: Tuesday, December 3, 2013 3:01 AM
To: Jon Bird <Jon.Bird@ideaworks.com.au>
Subject: VML Daily Digisphere 12/02/2013: Cyber Monday



TODAY'S THEME

CYBER MONDAY

The term Cyber Monday was coined by Shop.org in a press release that reported the results of a 2004 research study showing that the Monday following Thanksgiving was one of the most popular online shopping days of the year. Cyber Monday is similar to Black Friday, only without the long lines and pushy fellow shoppers.

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[Cyber Monday Stats](#)

[Canadians Plan to Shop on Cyber Monday](#)

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Cyber Monday Stats

BusinessPundit, November 21, 2013

Cyber Monday statistics show that this special shopping day has become the new Black Friday. Online shopping is a big business in this day and age. It has also increased dramatically over the past few years and continues to grow in popularity and big earnings. In 2007, online shopping garnered \$122.72 billion American dollars. By 2010, this amount increased to \$142.49 billion, and just last year, in 2012, it reached \$186.15 billion. It is expected that 2013 will gain online businesses even more earnings.

Not surprisingly, online sales are highest during the months of November and December. In particular, Cyber Monday gains a significant amount of sales as people

are doing their holiday shopping at these times.

The actual term of 'Cyber Monday' came about in 2005 and was coined by Shop.org. Only a few weeks into the creation of the term, as many as six million individuals searched for it online through the Google search engine. Then, when the first ever Cyber Monday came, as many as 27.7 million people shopped online. In 2012, the top searched retailers during Cyber Monday were Amazon, Walmart, Target, Sears and Best Buy.

[Read Full Article](#)



Canadians Plan to Shop on Cyber Monday

Marketwired, November 27, 2013

Cyber Monday - one of the busiest online shopping days of the year - is continuing to grow in popularity for Canadian consumers as well. According to the 2013 BMO Holiday Spending Outlook, nearly half (49%) of Canadians plan to shop online this Cyber Monday - up from 44% in 2012.

The survey, conducted by Pollara, also found:

- Those planning to make purchases on Cyber Monday this year expect to spend an average of \$273, led by those in Ontario (\$288) and Quebec (\$284).
- Regionally, Ontarians are most likely (61%) to shop online this Cyber Monday. Quebecers were the least likely, coming in at 31%.
- Overall, 50% of Canadians plan to do some of their holiday shopping online.

"Canadians are early adopters of digital payment technology, so it's no surprise that nearly half of Canadians plan to shop online for Cyber Monday," said Nick Mastromarco, Managing Director, Credit Card Products, BMO Bank of Montreal. "Retailers and banks alike are now starting to offer a variety of tools and services to help make the online shopping experience more secure and convenient for consumers." For example, BMO MasterPass is a free digital wallet that securely stores BMO MasterCard customers' credit card and shipping information so they can check out faster when they shop online.

[Read Full Article](#)



Mobile Apps Boost Conversions

Business 2 Community.com, November 27, 2013

Cyber Monday. But maybe the name should be changed to Mobile Monday, as a new study from Artisan Mobile reveals that 77% of consumers intend to make purchases through a native mobile app this holiday season. That's quite a jump in just one year.

In 2012, mobile sales doubled over 2011 sales, accounting for 13% of total web-based purchases. More than 18% of shoppers used a mobile device to access a retailer's website over the holiday shopping season, an increase of 70% over 2011.

The Artisan Mobile survey found that 70% of loyal app users said they are more likely to use an app if it's personalized, and 52% claim a personalized app is important to them. To personalize your mobile app and improve your mobile retail holiday conversions, Ayo Omojola, Founder and CEO at Hipmob.com, recommends these six tips:

- Improve your pictures. Instead of thumbnails, use big, clear, zoomed-in, high resolution photos that are optimized for retina screens.
- Bring the 'point' front and center. Have your app open on the place where the customer most wants to be.
- Make the call-to-action as large and centered as you can.
- Reduce the number of taps so the user has to perform fewer actions to get to checkout.
- Turn the funnel upside down. Capture buy intent first, then capture the details (like shipping, sizes, colors, etc.) next.
- Present payment options like Paypal and Amazon, so the user doesn't have to enter credit card information.

[Read Full Article](#)



Save The Vacation Day, Spend Cyber Monday At Work

Jacksonville Business Journal, November 22, 2013

Fewer employees may be looking over their shoulders hoping their boss doesn't catch them buying that awesome crock-pot on sale this year on Cyber Monday. According to a recent survey by Robert Half Technology, 16% of chief information officers give their workers unrestricted access to online shopping sites - up from 10% last year.

The survey, based on more than 2,300 telephone interviews with CIOs from a random sample of U.S. companies in 23 major metro areas with 100 or more employees, also found that less than 29% said their firms block access to online shopping sites - down from 33% a year ago. Fifty four percent said they allow access to shopping sites, but monitor for excessive use - nearly stable from 2012's 55%.

"Employees appreciate being able to attend to occasional personal business, like holiday shopping, while at work," said John Reed, senior executive director of Robert Half Technology, in a news release. "Workers who are given this type of flexibility may be more focused and productive on the job because they're worrying less about getting through their holiday to-do lists."

[Read Full Article](#)



Online Retailers Make The Most Of Cyber Monday

Business 2 Community.com, November 25, 2013

The festive shoppers' spirit affects social media sites. Over the past couple of years Cyber Monday was trending on Twitter and conversations about it were happening across other social media platforms, which has in the past driven incremental traffic to retailers' sites. It can be difficult to compete with larger retailers as they already have a well-established consumer base but there are a few things that e-commerce sites can do to make the most of this season.

Update your keywords

As the season approaches, start to add seasonal keywords to your website such as 'gifts', 'Christmas', 'holiday shopping'. Also focus on the features of your products, like color, size or price. Yes, it might be time consuming, but if you don't have the right keywords, how will shoppers find you?

Use highly targeted PPC campaigns

Online retailers often disregard pay-per-click advertising as too expensive, but keyword-driven PPC can be very cost-effective during the festive period. Take the opportunity to run customized PPC campaigns using targeted keywords surrounding this season, which may also be less expensive to run as they'll be in a niche category.

Focus on capturing data and clients

Think about this season from the consumers' point of view. They are usually looking for the best deals, so make sure your products are easy to find on search engines or price comparison sites. This is the best time to attract more loyal consumers that will be coming back to your site after the festive season is gone.

[Read Full Article](#)



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Ruth Hamilton

VML Senior Research Analyst

www.vml.com

250 Richards Road, Kansas City, MO 64116

office: 816.308.7352

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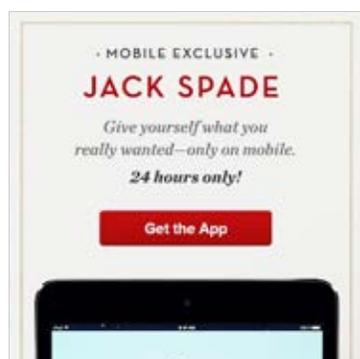
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Gilt.com kicks off Mobile Week to build on holiday sales momentum

By Chantal Tode

December 26, 2013



Gilt.com is holding mobile exclusive sales all week

Looking to further momentum behind its growing mobile commerce business, online flash sales site Gilt.com kicked off a new promotion last night called Mobile Week that includes a host of mobile-exclusive sales with top brands.

Gilt.com continues to see mobile sales grow, with Black Friday 2013 its biggest mobile revenue day ever, followed by Cyber Monday 2013 as the second biggest. To help build off this growth, Gilt.com mobile users will find one sale every day between Dec. 25 and 29 for each of its core categories: Women, men, home and baby & kids.

"Our members love our mobile exclusive sales, and during Mobile Week, we'll be offering even more sales and featuring some of Gilt's top brands just for our mobile users, such as 7 for all mankind and vintage designer handbags for women,

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Jack Spade and Theory for men, Cuisinart and Matteo for home and Egg and Maclaren for Kids,” said Jason John, vice president of online, mobile and social marketing at Gilt.com.

“This will not only create excitement on our Gilt app, but also help to drive awareness for current Gilt members who are not on mobile,” he said.



Reaching new users

With many consumers receiving new mobile devices as holiday presents, [Gilt.com](#) will use the promotion to encourage these new users to download its app while also driving interest from existing users.

Following the first sale at 9pm ET on Christmas Day, new Gilt.com mobile-exclusive sales will launch at noon ET on Dec. 26 through Dec. 29.

Some of the brands that will be featured include 7 for all mankind, Jack Spade, Vince and Theory, Cuisinart, Matteo and Parvez Taj, Egg, Alex Toys as well as Maclaren.

A vertical red graphic with white text. At the top, it says "SIGN UP NOW" in large, bold, white capital letters. Below that, in a white rectangular box, it says "Mobile Commerce Daily" in red, with "Mobile" and "Daily" in a larger font than "Commerce". Underneath the box, it says "The premier mobile commerce publication" in white. Below that, it says "News • Analysis • Opinion" in white. At the bottom, it says "FREE" in large, bold, white capital letters, and "MobileCommerceDaily.com" in a smaller white font.

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A tablet device is shown vertically, displaying a fashion advertisement. The ad features a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a black blazer over a black top and black pants. She is standing against a textured, light-colored wall. The tablet's status bar at the top shows the time as 9:27 AM.

Mobile is a key focus at Gilt, with more than 40 percent of its overall revenue coming from smartphones and tablets and the Gilt app having been downloaded more than 7 million times.

During the Black Friday/Cyber Monday holiday shopping weekend, mobile sales were even stronger. From Thursday, Nov. 28 through Saturday, Nov. 30, more than 50 percent of revenue came from mobile.

Mobile sales climb

Given the strong performance from mobile, Gilt.com has been focused on delivering a strong mobile experience.

For example, this summer the retailer introduced the "Your Personal Sale" personalization algorithm to tailor its inventory of daily sales for a more customized shopping experience on

mobile ([see story](#)).

"Mobile is a key focus of our business, and we're continuing to see it grow – currently, more than 40 percent of our overall revenue comes from mobile, and that was even higher during this year's Black Friday/Cyber Monday holiday shopping weekend," Mr. John said.

"We wanted to create a mobile-focused holiday of our own and offer mobile exclusive sales featuring some of our top brands across our women's, men's, kids and home categories during a period when traditionally, most other retailers are clearing out their inventory for the season instead," he said.

"Additionally, many people receive new mobile devices for Christmas, so this is also a way for us to activate and engage with those users."

Final Take

Chantal Tode is associate editor on Mobile Commerce Daily, New York



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Gray Thursday, Black Friday, Cyber Monday: Oh, How the Holiday Savings Have Spread

03 Dec 2013 / By: Robin Sherk

On the backdrop of a shorter season and [tepid shopper sentiment](#), the holiday shopping kickoff has begun. Our initial take on Black Friday/Cyber Monday events is that retailers are getting more creative and digitally integrated, while the events continue to be drawn out as stores work harder to spur sales.

To be sure, shoppers are looking for deals to stretch their spending, with more reporting that they would only shop over the weekend if they found a good deal. Moreover, consumers are getting more skeptical of the value of Black Friday offers. As Kate Senzamici detailed in [this report](#), a majority of shoppers do not feel that Black Friday sales are particularly unique to Black Friday.

From Black Friday to Gray Thursday

This year, even more retailers released their sales on Thursday. For the first time JCPenney and Macy's joined in the mix of Thursday in-store sales, with Macy's also releasing its Black Friday offers to email subscribers on Thursday morning. Others, such as Kohl's and Best Buy, bumped their opening times up earlier in the day. Taking this even further, Costco's offers started on Wednesday, and Amazon launched website offers on Sunday, November 24th. Many others now refer to Cyber Monday as a week-long occasion.

Innovative Approaches

- *Rewarding engagement* – Attracting core shoppers, Target offered special deals for its REDcard holders and Cartwheel users, while Toys "R" Us let its rewards members have access to deals starting as early as Wednesday this year. Encouraging further engagement, BJ's Warehouse Club let members vote via Facebook for which items would go on sale, with those casting a ballot receiving the coupon for the winning deal.
- *Alternative offers* – Going beyond the "50% off the store" approach, Old Navy introduced an "Overnight Millionaire" sweepstakes for the first 500 shoppers at each store. Recipients received a game card for a chance to win a million dollars the next day. Others emphasized their distinctive assortments, as Best Buy touted "Only@Best Buy" products and Sam's Club stressed new items and "Extreme Value" gift cards this year.
- *Staging the reveal of the deal* – Deal releases became more punctuated, further spreading out the excitement. For instance, Lands' End added doorbuster sales to its website at 5:00 a.m., noon, and 5:00 p.m., while Amazon added deals every 10 minutes. Others chose selective channels to release deals: Lowe's, for instance, announced deals on Pinterest, a site that disproportionately attracts women.
- *Adding assurances* – Best Buy added a holiday price guarantee this season, and Walmart became more aggressive with its price assertions by ad matching select Black Friday offers from Target, Toys "R" Us, and Best Buy a week in advance. In addition, Walmart dramatically expanded its one-hour guarantee access to sale items.

Spreading Beyond the Border

Also notable, is how Black Friday is expanding; it's not just a U.S. phenomenon anymore. While neither Canadians nor the British celebrate Thanksgiving in November, both of these countries saw Black Friday excitement spread this year.

In Canada, American retailers such as Best Buy and Walmart have touted Black Friday deals in the country for years. However, this season domestic retailers ranging from Canadian Tire to Holt Renfrew and Shoppers Drug Mart decided to join in. Given that Thursday and Friday are not holidays in the country, the deals were positioned as four-day sales events to include the weekend. More than an effort to defend against cross-border deal-hunters, the Canadian holiday season is cementing this event as a pre-season complement to Boxing Day, a local post-season event held December 26th.

In the United Kingdom, Black Friday is a newer phenomenon, particularly as retailers are not exposed to cross-border shopping pressures. Seeking to expand the shopping season excitement, ASDA (owned by Walmart, Inc.) offered Black Friday deals in-store, and Argos and John Lewis joined in online this year. While it may take several years to gain the momentum already building in Canada, we do see that this event has the potential to become a significant holiday shopping landmark in the market.

Overall, How Did Black Friday Net Out?

Initial reports by lead retailers, including Target and Walmart, suggest that traffic was strong, particularly on Thursday and online. In terms of who came out ahead, Kantar Retail's [ShopperScape® data indicated](#) earlier that the top Black Friday destinations this season were to be Walmart (in-store) and Amazon (online).

Despite all the emphasis placed on Black Friday, retailers still have time to have a successful Holiday 2013, as it is the final week before Christmas, and not Black Friday, that still packs the greatest retail punch as procrastinators and bargain hunters make their presence felt in the waning days of the holiday season.

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High street unveils American-style 'Black Friday' shopping bonanza

Stores follow US tradition of big discount day after last weekend in November in bid to capture Christmas pay packet

Sarah Butler

The Guardian, Friday 29 November 2013 06.49 AEST

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Black Friday starts earlier than ever in the US, with some shops opening on Thanksgiving evening. UK retailers are copying the concept hoping to capture the last pay packet before Christmas. Photograph: Lucy Nicholson/REUTERS

The Christmas shopping season will kick off in earnest as British retailers bid to kickstart spending by adopting the American tradition of "Black Friday" discounting.

The first weekend in December is always a high spending period as the nation collects its last pay packet before Christmas Day. Online retailers are used to seeing a surge in sales on "Cyber Sunday" and "Mega Monday" as shoppers try to ensure they get the presents they want delivered in time for the big day.

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More on Black Friday



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Beauty tips: Sali Hughes's guide to Christmas

But now the US tradition of Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving when shops slash prices to encourage sales, is gathering pace in the UK. It is being driven by US retailers with a foot on this side of the Atlantic including Apple, Amazon and [Asda](#), which are offering special discounts.

Amazon has been offering discounts all week while Asda, owned by US retailer Walmart, is planning a sale in its stores including offers of up to 70% off a range of products including plasma TVs and tablets. [John Lewis](#) is running a one-day Black Friday sale in stores and online partly because Apple will be offering discounts and its "never knowingly undersold" price pledge means it must match cheaper prices elsewhere. Apple's iPad Air is expected to be one of the department store's bestsellers this Christmas.

Andrew Moore, Asda's chief merchandising officer for general goods, said: "The last weekend in November is always a critical trading period in retail and with our Black Friday deals – a first for a UK supermarket – we're anticipating the busiest shopping day of the year so far." He said Asda would also be offering online deals on Monday.

The focus on discounting during retailers' biggest sales period when many stores make the majority of their annual profits is a risky new trend. It comes as retailers expect shoppers to spend £40.3bn in the runup to Christmas. That total is just 3.5% more than last year, as wage rises have failed to keep up with inflation.

More than 25m British consumers are expected to spend in pre-Christmas sales this year, spending an average £174 each according to research from RedEye, which claims that more than half of shoppers will shun the January sales in favour of finding discounts in November and December.

Mark Patron, chief executive of RedEye, said: "Britain has become a nation of discount junkies."

Mark Lewis, online director at John Lewis, said that the retailer had decided to launch its own deals this year, as well as price-matching competitors' discounts, because the Black Friday idea was catching on with British shoppers.

"Black Friday has really caught the imagination of our customers. Last year we felt they really engaged with it and so we would go a step further."

He said that interest would kick off early in the morning as shoppers used their mobile phones to get the best deals as soon as they woke up in the same way as they did during the recent launches of the games console Xbox One and Apple's latest gadget, the iPad Air. Online sales are expected to peak on Sunday and Monday, but shoppers are increasingly prepared to spend closer to Christmas as delivery services become more reliable. Many stores will now deliver up until 23 December.

Live coverage



Black Friday events and protests – live
America's day of bargain bingeing and capitalism in action will be marked by hundreds of protests against major retailers. Follow the day's events here

In pictures



Black Friday sales send US Christmas shoppers into a frenzy - in pictures
Black Friday struck early this year, with more than a dozen major retailers beginning their sale on Thanksgiving. Witness the pandemonium...

Opinion



Buying technology gadgets on Black Friday usually isn't a great deal
Dan Gillmor: I've never understood what motivates people to show up before dawn at a shopping mall

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Sali Hughes shares some of her favourite ideas for beauty products that would make great presents this Christmas



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Xan Brooks, Peter Bradshaw and Catherine Shoard review Saving Mr Banks, Jeune et Jolie and Carrie
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StigOhara

28 November 2013 8:53pm

14

Yes, all definitely bargains [worth killing for](#) I'm sure we all agree.

[Report](#)



5 PEOPLE, 5 COMMENTS

Maentwrog

28 November 2013 8:53pm

62



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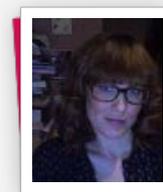
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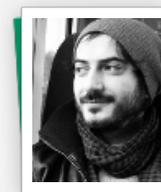
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The Guardian's online dating site



NurseEast, 30



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Black Friday has to be the shittest name for something supposed to encourage people to buy stuff since Leprosy Thursday: 50 % off wooden legs day.

Report



Ikonoclast ▶ Maentwrog

13

29 November 2013 9:30am

And in the USA it historically represented the day retailers went into the black by shoppers having a day off after thanksgiving and spending it in the malls etc. So for it to work in the UK it'll only be online, unless we get 2 days bank holiday, which would be ace this time of year.

But shopping, is that all we're about? Buying more shite we don't need to make our unbalanced economy even worse?

Report



WalneyGirl ▶ Ikonoclast

5

29 November 2013 12:08pm

Of course it is. The economy is geared to mass consumerism. It's your public duty to buy as much overpriced tat as you can at this time of year.

Report



Esco91 ▶ Maentwrog

1

29 November 2013 5:56pm

It's even worse when you consider Britain already has a

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samxred

7

28 November 2013 9:00pm

We had the same thing here today in Nottingham. 60 people waiting for a charity shop to re-open after the recent floods.

Report



rorke

1

28 November 2013 9:39pm

This comes to mind rather often this time of year.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4NooXXUXHQ>

Report



4 PEOPLE, 5 COMMENTS



DenryMachin

15

28 November 2013 9:51pm

aka Buy Nothing Day

<https://www.adbusters.org/campaigns/bnd>

<http://www.buynothingday.co.uk/>

Report



SpecialRX ▶ DenryMachin

14

29 November 2013 3:31am

My immediate family, my partner and I... No. Maybe.

I am a
 Seeking
 Aged to

guardianjobs

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CAMBRIDGE
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Director of Business Systems and Infrastructure
 Cambridge | £90,000 - £110,000 base
 CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Me, my partner and my immediate family... No, hang on. My partner, my immediate family and I.... Grrrr!

The crazy buggers I love the most have all agreed to do a buy-nothing christmas this year. We can, if we wish, exchange gifts but only homemade ones. We've decided to forgo the traditional christmas lunch too.

Its going to be slightly strange but Im actually looking forward to it.

Report



SocialSum ▸ SpecialRX

29 November 2013 11:03am

2

I can understand not buying presents, but no lunch as well?

Report



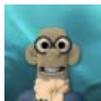
SpecialRX ▸ SocialSum

29 November 2013 11:27am

I mean we will eat lunch but not the traditional spread. This

Show 2 more replies

Last reply: 29 November 2013 1:06pm



Watty145

28 November 2013 10:08pm

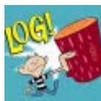
10

So 'Black Monday' was bad, but 'Black Friday' is good. I'm confused now...

Report



5 PEOPLE, 5 COMMENTS



DidntReadTheArticle

28 November 2013 10:35pm

44

Do we have to do everything the yanks do?

I'm surprised our stores haven't been trying to get us to celebrate Thanksgiving as well.

Report



djw300 ▸ DidntReadTheArticle

28 November 2013 10:58pm

20

It's probably only a matter of time.

Report



GenerationWHY ▸ djw300

29 November 2013 12:01am

6

no don't say that

Report



Miamijim ▸ DidntReadTheArticle

30 November 2013 10:30am

1

We could have that but only as a way of saving thanks that

Show 2 more replies

Last reply: 30 November 2013 4:44pm

8 PEOPLE, 8 COMMENTS

trimphone

28 November 2013 10:41pm

13



Should go completely the opposite way and reintroduce half day closing day on Wednesdays and America should copy us. Ha! Nobody would know what to do. I think I'm right, but maybe wrong, in thinking Germany still has an early closing day in the week and I think Saturdays shops also close early. Yet they still manage OK. Might have all changed now but I'm sure it used to be like that not long ago.

Report



Thebarron ▶ trimphone

3

29 November 2013 1:18am

Was in Cyprus again recently and it has gone from half days most of the week (officially only one day) to nearly everything open till 10pm and even later, many shops now open on Sundays even in non tourist areas. Nothing to do directly with the USA just everyone is broke. Well I say everyone, the *ankers are OK.

Report



Ikonoclast ▶ Thebarron

4

29 November 2013 9:31am

Just so shite isn't it, rescue an economy by the shops opening til all hours, despite folk having no money to spend in them..

Report



QueenBoadicea ▶ Ikonoclast

4

29 November 2013 9:50am

And what about the poor sods on minimum wage who have

Show 5 more replies

Last reply: 30 November 2013 4:25pm

3 PEOPLE, 3 COMMENTS



djw300

8

28 November 2013 10:57pm

Or alternatively just wait until a few days before Christmas when, in a panic to shift stock and boost sales figures for the month, the retailers are discounting everything.

Report



Ikonoclast ▶ djw300

29 November 2013 9:32am

Give your nearest and dearest some presents but mainly vouchers...?

Report



ID_askGCHQ ▶ djw300

3

29 November 2013 1:29pm

What's wrong with some barbecue briquets and flowers from my local petrol station on the way home on Christmas eve?

Report



2 PEOPLE, 2 COMMENTS



heatherselkie

14

28 November 2013 10:59pm

Silly. Canadian businesses have taken on Black Friday(plus thursday, saturday, sunday, monday) in recent years as well. For years I didn't

even know what 'black friday' was, just that it was an american thing. It falls on the friday after thanksgiving which is a big holiday in the US. People get a few days off, generally visit family so are all cooped up, getting on each others nerves and want to get out and do something, so how about shopping? Also it's generally the first time in the year retail businesses are in the black and want to push that through their biggest business time of Christmas until the end of the calendar year. It's also a way to get rid of old stock as new goods generally appear in January.

So for Canada and the UK there may not be a point to black friday and is yet another ruse to get us to go shopping. I certainly cannot afford to go shopping, can you? Even if there was something I 'really wanted' and it was on sale, I would not have the money to buy it. As the years go by, more and more christmas has become something to ignore as finances become worse and worse. If only grocery stores would have black friday sales, but this isn't about necessity.

Report



RecantedYank ▶ heatherselkie

30 November 2013 4:41pm

chuckling...you will be pleased to know that our grocery store did just that. We had some great sales (particularly on non-perishables such as laundry detergent, household paper items, personal hygiene items, cleaning agents etc.). They also threw in \$.50 off/gal of petrol for up to 20 gallons for any transaction over 100.00. Quite a few people took advantage of stocking up, not only on the sale items, which one needs throughout the year, but also on the petrol discount.). Clean flat, clean clothes and something to wipe my derriere with is worth more to me than some electronic gizmo.

Report



lukeddriifter

29 November 2013 12:26am

I wash myself with a rag on a stick.

Report



28

2 PEOPLE, 2 COMMENTS



Governor

29 November 2013 1:24am

As we don't celebrate Thanksgiving the whole "Black Friday" thing is a nonsense. In any event why should we celebrate something which sounds like a stock market crash or a mass murder.

Much better for us to ask Parcel Force to name the last day for guaranteed delivery of internet purchased items before Christmas and name it ""Stockout Day" or "Postman Pat Day" or "White Van day"

Report



15



Lollypants ▶ Governor

29 November 2013 12:12pm

I could get fully on-board with a Postman Pat Day.

Report



4

2 PEOPLE, 2 COMMENTS



CaptainRedcouch

29 November 2013 1:32am

I can't wait until someone is crushed to death by the baying mobs hunting ceaselessly for bargains for the handwringing about our consumer society to begin. Game on.

Report



4



Abertawe ▶ CaptainRedcouch

3

29 November 2013 8:05am

I can't wait until someone is crushed to death...

Really?

Report



BraveheartAlex

20

29 November 2013 1:45am

Nothing to see here people. No bargains. Just the crap they couldn't sell throughout the year - with a 10% reduction and a made up RRP. Black Friday me balls!

Report



2 PEOPLE, 2 COMMENTS



ehcoman

13

29 November 2013 2:30am

We give them Piers Morgan, they give us this shite. Got off lightly I think.

Report



Miamijim ▶ ehcoman

30 November 2013 10:32am

To be honest if we gave them Piers Morgan we should be grateful they gave us anything at all....

Report



MSSG

1

29 November 2013 2:34am

Buy, buy, buy more and bye!

Report



SpecialRX

3

29 November 2013 3:20am

I find it really, really disturbing.

Report



WorksEm

10

29 November 2013 3:55am

People of Great Britain,
All hope is lost for us.
Save yourselves!

Report



6 PEOPLE, 15 COMMENTS



Mindmodic

19

29 November 2013 6:21am

I really hate that christmas seems to be all about shopping and gluttony.

Report



CooleyHgShell ▶ Mindmodic

2

29 November 2013 10:29am



As opposed to celebrating an irrational cult's jealous, vengeful, sadistic and psychopathic deity?

Report



dfic1999 ▶ CooleyHgShell

3

29 November 2013 1:01pm

Hey! That's no way to describe Father Christmas! (unless you're a fan of Futurama).

Report



CooleyHgShell ▶ dfic1999

29 November 2013 1:10pm

Father Christmas perpetuates and even worsens inequality by

Show 12 more replies

Last reply: 01 December 2013 4:44pm

2 PEOPLE, 2 COMMENTS



psj1981

6

29 November 2013 8:29am

I think being killed during a "Black Friday" discount shopping fight is probably Darwinism in its purest form. We should raise a communist-style "Hall of the fallen hero's" style mausoleum to these people and forever keep them in our hearts so we never forget that its just not worth it.

Report



dfic1999 ▶ psj1981

2

29 November 2013 1:03pm

Tomb of the Mystery Shopper - 'Never Knowingly Undersold'

Report



2 PEOPLE, 2 COMMENTS



stu pat

9

29 November 2013 9:42am

'Trick or treating' and now Black Friday. It was only Wednesday that my daughter came home from nursery with a Thanksgiving picture. What has happened to this once great nation?

Report



QueenBoadicea ▶ stu pat

7

29 November 2013 9:51am

We have been sold to the US money men

Report



plymouth1

4

29 November 2013 9:55am

Aldi and ebay

Only two stores you need

Report



QueenBoadicea

7

29 November 2013 10:01am



We are not spending this Christmas, mainly because we have spent all of our savings on a multi-fuel stove. But saying that we got most of the presents, cards, paper, gift tags and crackers in the January sales, the rest are handmade. The turkey was half price at Easter and the veg is growing in the garden. I have made the Christmas cake and pudding and the mincemeat was 20p a jar last Christmas. All canapés and food will be home made. The wine and Beer is fermenting well and the 5 year old artificial tree will come down from the loft, so this will be the most frugal Christmas we have had for a long time and I am really looking forward to it :)

Report



CooleyHgShell

29 November 2013 10:27am

1

Great. I would have gone shopping this evening after work, but now I won't because Oxford Street and everywhere nearby will be even more crowded than normal.

Report



2 PEOPLE, 3 COMMENTS



hubbahubba

29 November 2013 10:31am

1

My local ASDA announced yesterday they were opening at 8am specifically for this. At 8.10am someone from the store strolled out and said, basically, that they couldn't be arsed to open until 8.30am (their normal opening time).

People waiting thanked the man for informing us. I can't imagine it would be that genial in the US.

Report



Joe5000 ▶ hubbahubba

29 November 2013 2:22pm

1

Isn't Asda 24 hours now?

Report



hubbahubba ▶ Joe5000

29 November 2013 3:33pm

1

The one by me is in a shopping complex, so usually abides by their opening times.

Report



nowwhataretheyupto

29 November 2013 10:40am

7

God help those poor desperate souls. The land fill stampede begins. Sorry, why are we now adopting this idea from Walmart?. If ever there was a cause not to support, it's the one of shopping in a Walmart store. Pathetic.

Report



2 PEOPLE, 2 COMMENTS



jswalker

29 November 2013 10:48am

16

Thanksgiving is an American import too far. It means fuck all outside the USA and should stay there.

Report





CarpetEater ▶ jswalker

29 November 2013 4:28pm

1

There is a Canadian Thanksgiving Day too.

Report



3 PEOPLE, 3 COMMENTS



moneyallgone

29 November 2013 11:18am

5

Can we not get the US to adopt something of ours in return? Bonfire night, perhaps.

Report



nowwhataretheyupto ▶ moneyallgone

29 November 2013 11:25am

4

They already did, our country.

Report



cmreveley ▶ moneyallgone

29 November 2013 11:18pm

1

halloween? our language? our legal system? our religion (of the time)? being us?

not that I'm not pissed off at the black friday thing.

Report



2 PEOPLE, 2 COMMENTS



metalmicky

29 November 2013 11:38am

8

I fucking hate all this "stuff"

Black Friday, Cyber Monday, Christmas adverts, wear a stupid fucking "christmas" jumper to show how crazzeeee I am.

Yeah, I'm grumpy.

Report



ID_askGCHQ ▶ metalmicky

29 November 2013 1:24pm

3

I see a new grumpy Monday coming up... let's all join in

Report



2 PEOPLE, 2 COMMENTS



Madeinllson

29 November 2013 11:49am

9

On Breakfast TV they kept going on about Black Friday as though it was some ancient tradition from Dickens or before. Predicting 'retail madness'. Then every ad break was Asda or someone telling us that it was Black Friday and announcing massive discounts on their overstocked crap.

And we thought Halloween and School Proms were bad.

Report



robertdaniel ▶ Madeinllson

30 November 2013 12:12am

Black Friday may not be a tradition, but the media jumping on a band wagon? that's been around for a long while

Report



krafty132

29 November 2013 12:25pm

This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our [community standards](#). Replies may also be deleted. For more detail see [our FAQs](#).



OrlandosTwin

29 November 2013 12:31pm

This is the UK not America. These invented traditions are promoted to part us from our money!

I thought Black Friday - to the superstitious - was whenever there was a Friday the 13th. The next one is in a fortnight's time, Friday 13 December.

Report



3



AnotherBee

29 November 2013 12:41pm

Listen folks, if you don't need it, don't buy it.

Report



2

2 PEOPLE, 2 COMMENTS



oldtrev

29 November 2013 12:58pm

How about Blackout Friday?

Report



2



APleasantPeninsula ▶ oldtrev

30 November 2013 2:44am

You mean "buy nothing day"? I've unofficially celebrated that in the US for years now.

Report



2 PEOPLE, 2 COMMENTS



whateve4321

29 November 2013 1:03pm

the only winners are the big retail corporations!, that's all about xmas isn't it?

Report



3



robertdaniel ▶ whateve4321

30 November 2013 12:13am

hit. nail. head.

Report



2 PEOPLE, 3 COMMENTS



CarpetEater

29 November 2013 1:43pm

We avoid spending money over Xmas by treating it as a religious

3

festival. It is an unusual idea I grant you, but there you have it.

Report



krafty132 ▶ CarpetEater

29 November 2013 2:19pm

You are not a Scrooge I trust lol.Surely you must acknowledge that buying things is integral to this religious festival-you are not going to have carpet for Christmas dinner I trust pmsl

Report



CarpetEater ▶ krafty132

29 November 2013 2:27pm

We only give gifts to children, and usually small ones at that. If you look into it, you will find that the commercial aspect of Xmas is much more of a secular concept. We will probably be having curried crab for Xmas dinner, as my wife is Sri Lankan.

Report



krafty132

29 November 2013 2:16pm

You are not a Scrooge I trust lol.Surely you must acknowledge that buying things is integral to this religious festival-you are not going to have carpet for Christmas dinner I trust pmsl

Report



CarpetEater

29 November 2013 4:29pm

Tomorrow must be ThankGodItsFuckingWellOver Day.

Report



1



johnqpublic3

29 November 2013 5:14pm

Can we please have a bank holiday in October or November? Then we can shop, eat turkey, whatever, the economy will do fine.

That there is nothing between the end of August and Dec. 25 accounts for the frantic, drunken, argument-full holiday that is Christmas.

Report



Yogi

29 November 2013 7:14pm

Good God were turning into the 51st State..the Americanization of Britain is now in first gear.

Report



4



jackscht

29 November 2013 10:06pm

Repulsive

Report



1

Related information

Life and style

Christmas ·

Business

Asda · John Lewis · Retail industry ·

UK news



Christmas shopping begins with bumper buildup to Cyber Monday

2 Dec 2013

Success of Black Friday and the growth of sales via mobile devices suggest a lucrative Christmas is in store for retailers

30 Nov 2013

Fights break out at Asda as shoppers descend on Black Friday deals

20 Nov 2013

Asda puts shopping collection points in tube station car parks

18 Nov 2013

John Lewis weekly sales top £100m



This Christmas, all that glisters is being served for dinner

17 Nov 2013

Supermarkets add glitter and gold leaf to seasonal food in bid to replicate success of Heston Blumenthal's Christmas pudding

Hot topics

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116

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Share



COMMUNICATIONS

2013 Holiday: Best of Shopper

January 2014



2013 Holiday: Best of Shopper

As we look toward 2014, we thought we'd use a snapshot of 2013 Holiday retail activity as a **springboard for strategic thinking**.

The idea here is two-fold.

First, **think holiday and beyond**. Some of these approaches could address our brand / customer business needs throughout the year.

Second, **think like a shopper**. See what they see because these are the types of things shoppers are delighted by or have come to expect from the retailers and the brands they shop, buy and love!

2013 Holiday: Best of Shopper

- As you peruse these pages, consider these Holiday initiatives to reflect what's happening at retail on a macro level (i.e., fodder for us to discuss our goals & our retailer goals). Then we can apply them to our business to find new “ways-in,” to bring proactive thinking to PetSmart and Petco, and ultimately, to make a bigger impact in the marketplace.

- Recurring retail drivers we've discussed and continue to see:
 - Retailers across the board continue to look for ways to **drive traffic** – to get shoppers to drive past one store to shop *their* store. PetSmart and Petco are no different and if Hill's leads the way, Hill's would likely benefit. Here you'll see traffic-driving retail campaigns that have merit no matter what time of year.

 - PetSmart and Petco are also looking to drive **overarching category growth** – not just mere shifts. Here you'll see some examples of displays that drive a category by way of a shared approach or to gain a category leadership position.

 - Retailers continue to ask CPGs to **lean-in to their retail themes** / campaigns. Manufacturers are complying to secure the space, but are also **looking for ways to stand out**. Some examples follow. And while this also holds true at PetSmart and Petco, we've also heard **they'll break those rules** for the right, basket-building idea that's grounded in true insights.



COMMUNICATIONS

Traffic-Driving Initiatives

these examples are primarily retail-driven, but CPGs can certainly play a role in creating the initiative

Extremely FREE

□ Kohl's: Dream Receipt

- It was a Black Friday event and more this year. If you shopped early, you could be one of thousands of lucky shoppers to win a Dream Receipt at checkout...everything in the cart, absolutely free. And there was a chance to win every hour.
- There was also a second chance to online every day right up to Christmas
- And #dreamreceipt allowed people to share their dreams socially (and they did!)



5 http://youtu.be/rQF6RC_vOWM

A large advertisement for Kohl's Dream Receipt. The main text "WIN A DREAM RECEIPT" is written in large, bold, green letters. A woman in a dark blue dress and red boots is running towards the right, carrying a shopping bag that says "DREAM RECEIPT WINNER!". Several speech bubbles contain text: "EVERY STORE (ONLINE TOO)", "ONE WINNER!", "#DREAMRECEIPT", and "EVERY DAY!". At the top right, it says "We'll pay for one lucky shopper's receipt." Below the main text, it says "NOW-DEC.24 YOUR HOLIDAY SHOPPING COULD BE FREE". At the bottom, it says "FOR THE FULL EXPERIENCE, VISIT WWW.KOHL'S.COM/DREAMRECEIPT". A red banner at the bottom contains the text "Here's another way to win! Upload a pic of your receipt to Instagram or Twitter with #InstaDream for a chance to win a \$100 gift card daily. Now-Dec. 24. No Purchase Necessary. #INSTADREAM". At the very bottom, there is a small disclaimer: "See store or Kohls.com for details. No Purchase Necessary. Both Dream Receipts and #InstaDream Sweepstakes end 11:59pm CST on 12/24/13. Both sweepstakes open only to legal U.S. residents, 18 or older. Official Rules for both sweepstakes are available in store or at www.kohls.com/dreamreceipt. Void in Puerto Rico and where prohibited by law."

Extremely FREE

□ Kohl's: touchpoints included

- Circular Feature
- Direct Mail
- FB Cover
- Twitter Wallpaper
- Kiosk Screen
- Standee



Register Rewards Spin

Walgreens: Black Friday and Jingle Cash

- In November, the retailer distributed Black Friday coupons delivering 25% off any purchase via emails to registered shoppers and through its home page, Facebook page and app.
- The retailer also put a holiday spin on its "Register Rewards" program again this year, dangling \$5 to \$20 in "Jingle Cash" rewards with overall purchases of \$30 to \$100 over a two-week period.

3-DAY BLACK FRIDAY SALE

25% OFF

REGULARLY PRICED ITEMS*

3 Days
Online

Thursday-Saturday
11/28 - 11/30

Checkout Code: **TURKEY25**

[See hot sellers](#)

Shop thousands of products and web-exclusives. FREE shipping on orders over \$25.¹

1 Day
In Store

Friday Only!
11/29

[Show coupon in store](#)

[Get coupon](#)

Save on fun gifts, holiday décor, everyday needs and a whole lot more.²



Register Rewards Spin

Walgreens: touchpoints included

- Circular Features
- In-store Signage
- Shelf Signs
- Rack Headers
- Counter Clings
- Email
- Mobile Coupons



Socially Led

□ Target: Pinterest

- The social platform took a lead role in their holiday marketing plan... **using it to populate a microsite with "top-pinned" products. (also at-shelf)**
- The retailer's mobile-optimized **"Awesome Shop"** (in beta testing) **aggregated products currently trending on Pinterest** that had also received **four-star reviews on target.com** (although items without any reviews were also eligible).
- Visitors browsed items. Clicking on a specific item generated its **price, review rating, total number of reviews and recent pins**. Consumers could then either **re-pin** the product **or view it in target.com's e-commerce area**. A top-of-page banner ad ran throughout the website linked to the shop, invited shoppers to "discover the cool stuff everyone's talking about."

Best.Party.Ever. with David Stark

David Stark, celebrity event planner, shares his secrets to creating the perfect holiday party. From DIYs to recipes to unique decorating ideas – we're ready to party.

Target Follow Board Send Board 165 Pins 74,923 Followers

Layer gold and red plates for a more elegant take on rustic. For an adorable touch, use child-sized mittens as placecard holders, just write each guest's name to a label and attach.

A warm color palette creates a cozy holiday atmosphere.

Classic plaids—like these stockings—make the room feel

Yes a throw can serve as a tablecloth! It adds texture and a folksy feel to a classic table. Decorate it with natural elements—twine, greens, cranberry—to make it feel totally gorgeous.

awesome shop™ cool stuff everyone's talking about

today's finds: all products (1282)

all products (1282)

home (517)

women (207)

furniture (212)

baby (143)

christmas (89)

loya (55)

beauty (49)

electronics (21)

men (21)

kids (14)

entertainment (13)

sports & outdoors (13)

pet care (2)

halloween (1)

deals (248)

POP PINNED ON Pinterest @ TARGET

ELF ON THE SHELF DVD

9.95

Retail-Specific Promo

- An all-in Purina treats play and retail tie-in
 - Shoppers choose their grocery store and play Purina's instant win game. Wins are redeemed via chosen retailer's loyalty card. Shopper's are also enter for a chance to win a vacation getaway with their pet.



kroger.softcoin.com/programs/kroger/purina/
e - Home Inbox (4,267) - ashn... Calendar Google Hill's Extranet Marx ProMotion PL... Customer Log In | Box

Oh what fun!

Play our **Joyful Memories Instant Win Game** and enter for a chance to win a special retreat with your pet!

Choose your store below to begin.

JOYFUL PET MOMENTS

Brought to you by **PURINA**





My Location: No Store Found | Change | Find a Store

Welcome! What are you looking for today?



Sign In

Create an account

Home Departments WeeklyAd Coupons Promotions Pharmacy Our Brands Fuel Community

- Main
- Instant Win Game
- Prizes
- About the Program
- Product Spotlight
- Comfort and Joy

Joy to the pets!

Now through December 21, we're helping you stock up for a special season with your pets! Play our **Joyful Memories Instant Win Game** for a chance to win Purina® treats and be entered in our holiday sweepstakes.

Play the game!



Feedback



My Location: 3311 N Sterling Ave, Peoria, IL 61604 | Change | Find a Store

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About the Program

Joyful Pet Moments™ celebrates our love for our four-legged friends everywhere. Pets, partners, companions - they answer to many names. But whether they're dogs or cats, big or small, old or young - one thing's for certain, they all hold a special place in our hearts and lives.

We're teaming up with Purina to help shoppers give their pets a special season! Play for a chance to win a variety of Purina® treats in our **Joyful Memories Instant Win Game** - plus, get automatically entered in our sweepstakes for a special retreat with your pet!*



More about Purina

The North American headquarters for Nestlé Purina PetCare Company is located at Checkerboard Square in

What you could win!



We're giving away nearly **\$15,000 worth of great digital prizes** in our Joyful Memories Instant Win Game. Plus, you'll get an entry into our sweepstakes for a **special retreat with your pet*** the first time you play!

- Instant Win Game Prizes:**
- FREE 6-oz. package of Purina® Beggin® Dog Snacks (up to \$3.99)
 - FREE 7-oz. package of Purina® Busy® Chew Treats (up to \$3.99)
 - FREE 2 oz. tray of Fancy Feast® appetizers for cats (up to \$1.29)
 - FREE 3 oz. package of Purina® Whisker Lickin's® Cat Treats (up to \$1.30)

- Sweepstakes Prizes:**
- A Florida Retreat for Four - Plus Your Pet*
- Includes:**
- 3-Day, 2-Night Stay at the pet-friendly Loews® Coronado Bay Resort
 - Round-Trip Flight
 - \$500 Spending Money

Share the Fun:





COMMUNICATIONS

Category Growth Initiatives

these examples range from shared category pallets to seasonal approaches that helped the brand take a leadership position

Shared Category Play

- Walmart's category-focused batteries display featured "product as hero" during a time-period when that's exactly what role they play



Ratings & Review Twists

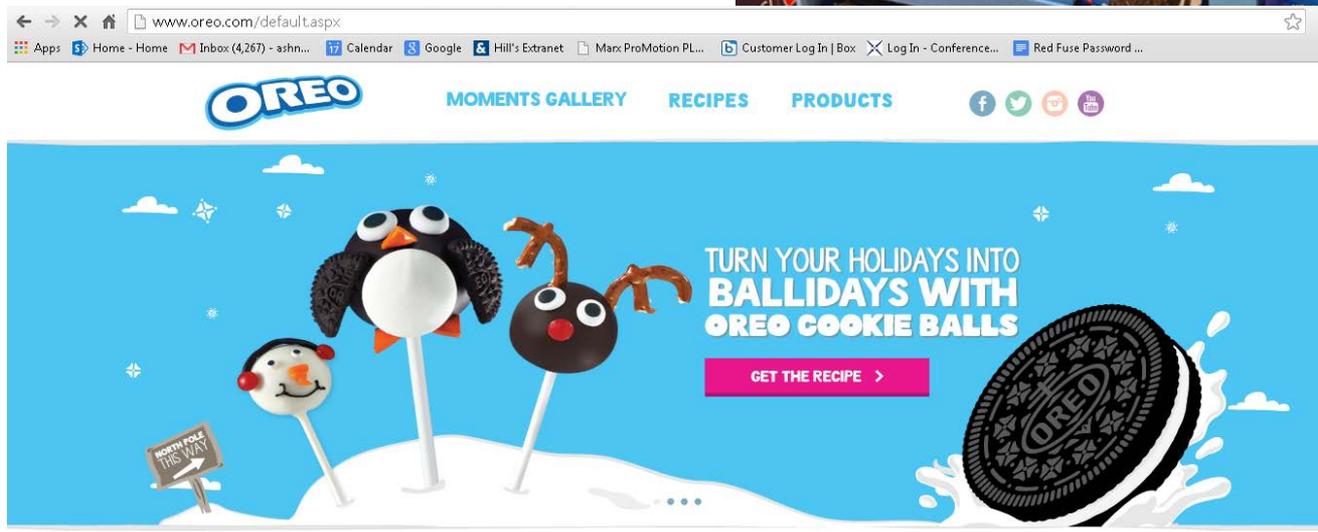
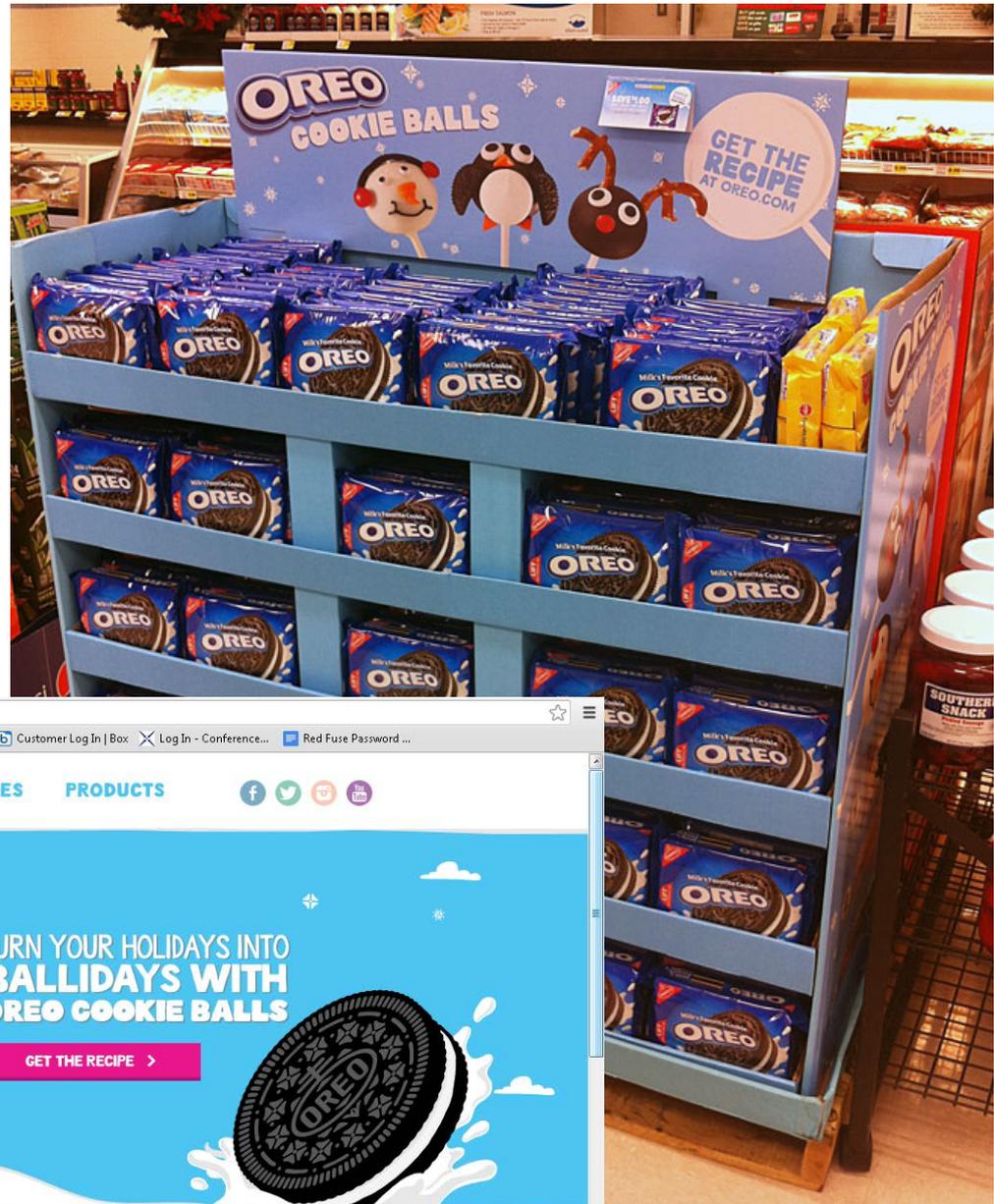
- ❑ Walmart developed messaging around what “shoppers” want in different ways in key categories – Entertainment and Toys
 - From featuring a “best of 2013 – gifts they want” entertainment pallet to Walmart’s more involved “chosen by kids” program



More than Meets the Eye

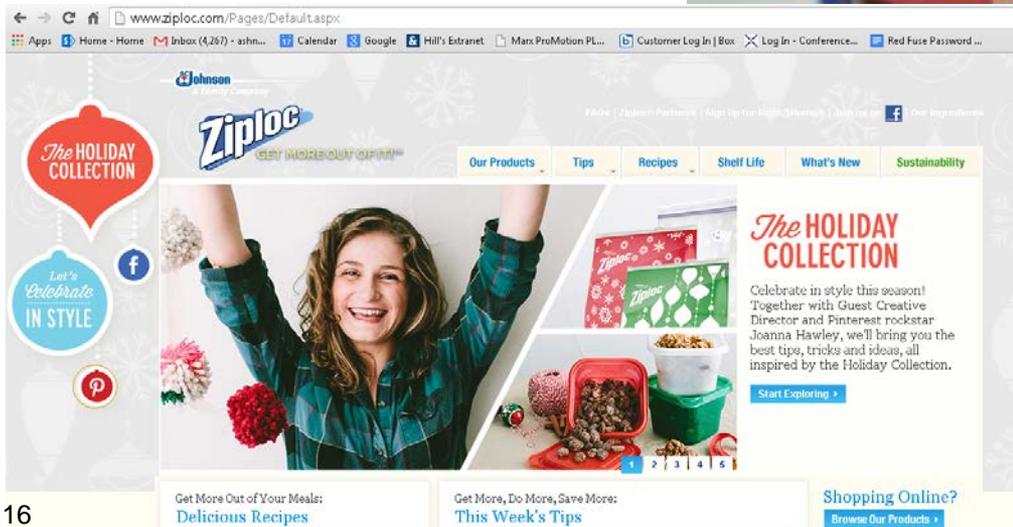
□ Oreo: Recipe-focus

- More than cookies this holiday... a recipe and a smile
- Cookie ball characters brought the display to life
- Drove shoppers online to get the recipe
- Pallet also offered \$1 off via a tearpad coupon



Seasonal Collection

- Seasonal Packaging and Product
 - Website featured seasonal tie-in, tips and recipes



Seasonal Scents

- Glade: Limited Edition Displays
 - Glade's Winter Collection asked shoppers to "Make Merry with limited edition fragrances"
 - Sparkling Spruce
 - Apple Cinnamon Cheer
 - Pure Vanilla Joy
 - Frosted Berry Kiss



Seasonal Characters

- Febreze and Little Debbie used seasonal language and die-cuts to break through the clutter





Form and Function become Fun

- Tic Tac messaging turned a functional benefit into pure holiday fun with “Shake Things Up This Season”
- The brand also featured special holiday SKUs





COMMUNICATIONS

Lean-In Yet Stand Out Initiatives

these examples show how brands leaned-in to retailer campaigns while using creative ways to stand out

Seasonal Brand

- This season, Purina spun their Beggin' Strips IMC equity into an old holiday storybook favorite.
 - “Visions of Beggin' Strips dance in their heads”
 - They also featured their “Beggin Nosecam” app



Customized Logo

- Greenie's also customized their logo for the holiday's... a cue that told shoppers the product was gift-worthy
- Season's Greenies creative appeared on special holiday packaging as well



Customized Logo

- This season, LeapPad leaned into Walmart's "More Christmas for your money" in-store campaign, but they also customized their very own logo to give it some holiday flair





Strategic Sub-Themes

Deal-Plus (more than coupons & TPRs)

TO DRIVE TRAFFIC

Kohl's: Dream Receipt savings became experiential and share worthy

Walgreens: Jingle Cash made Walgreens Balance Rewards special and fun

Purina: their national promo was linked to and activated by each retailer's loyalty card

Endorsed (forms of the now coveted ratings & reviews)

TO DRIVE TRAFFIC OR CATEGORY

Target: Pinterest pins told shoppers the product was "liked" and it linked to e-com

Walmart: Best Entertainment of 2013 / "Gifts they want" sent a credibility cue to shoppers

Walmart: Chosen by Kid's told shoppers what kids liked

Walmart: battery products became hero regardless of the brand & prompted purchase

Limited Time Only (in this case Holiday, but could tie to longer-term retail theme) **TO DRIVE CATEGORY**

Ziploc: standard products / portfolio became a "collection"

Glade: seasonal product and packaging

Febreze: seasonal product and packaging

Little Debbie: seasonal product and packaging

Functional becomes Emotional (they "get it – and me!") **TO DRIVE CATEGORY OR STAND OUT**

Oreo: product became a recipe and a recipe for fun too

Beggin' Strips: brand equity / IMC was woven into a storybook favorite

Tic Tac: point-of-difference was leveraged into fun

Febreze: "Bring home Holly Jolly scents" and snowman display die-cut

Little Debbie: "Unwrap a smile" and Santa/sleigh display die-cut



Implications for Hill's

- We know our overarching goals for 2014...
 - What strategic themes can we identify and test to help drive business at PetSmart and Petco? Category-driving programs? Emotional platforms?
 - What are overarching goals for PetSmart and Petco in 2014, so we can proactively take them thinking that drives traffic to their stores specifically? What can we develop or tap into that makes them uniquely different?

- Work with PMT / PTC Shopper & CDT & Insights teams to discuss 2014 retailer business goals, CBM plans, integrated opportunities and more in order to develop framework for business-building programs throughout the year
 - Isolate and evaluate key periods, retail objectives and themes, brand ties
 - Brainstorm customized program(s) for each
 - Map success criteria
 - Establish action plan



COMMUNICATIONS

Happy New Year

we look forward to digging in with you to gain incremental in-market success in 2014

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Holiday sales rise on discounts, online shopping

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AP
By ANNE D'INNOENZIO and JOSH BOAK, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Holiday shoppers were more than willing to spend during the holiday season, if they saw big discounts or were shopping online.

Sales rose 3.8 percent from last year for November and December combined, according to the National Retail Federation's analysis of federal figures. That was a healthy gain in a season that kept merchants worried right up until Christmas as people held off on spending.

That caution and increased online shopping made the holiday less festive at the mall. Shoppers stayed away from many traditional destinations like department stores and electronics stores.

The sales increase came in just shy of the trade group's forecast of a 3.9 percent gain. It was better than the 3.5 percent increase in 2012 and the 3.3 percent average for the past 10 years.

"It was a knock-down, drag-out battle between retailers to see who could discount the most to generate the most traffic," said Ken Perkins, president of Retail Metrics LLC, a research firm.

For retailers, those discounts came straight out of their profits. Many have cut their forecasts for the fourth quarter, and profits are expected to be the weakest since second quarter of 2009, when the economy was coming out of the Great Recession.

Perkins estimates that fourth-quarter profits will fall 0.7 percent from last year, the first decline since a 6.7 percent drop seen during the second quarter of 2009, according to his tally of 120 retailers.

January is already off to a slow start. Some stores like Express Inc. and Lululemon Athletica have said weak January sales are compounding their holiday-season woes. Express said it plans to continue heavy sales promotions, which it expects to last through the month.

"The consumer is fatigued and taking a break," Perkins said.

Retailers' fiscal year typically ends in late January or early February to include the pre-Christmas and post-Christmas seasons. A lot is at stake. November and December account for 20 percent of the retail industry's annual sales, on average.

PHOTO GALLERIES



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Jack Kleinhenz, economist at the National Retail Federation, agrees that the holiday season was challenging.

"It ended on a solid pace, but it was tempered by consumers' selectivity and preference to discounts," he said.

The National Retail Federation's figures include online sales but exclude sales at automotive dealers, gas stations and restaurants

They're extrapolated from Commerce Department retail sales figures, which were also released Tuesday.

That report showed retail sales rose 0.2 percent in December compared with November. That followed strong gains in October and November, helped by healthy auto sales.

According to the National Retail Federation's analysis of holiday business, sales rose 3 percent in November and 4.6 percent in December from a year earlier.

The results highlight how Americans' shopping habits are changing, posing challenges for retailers in 2014.

Over the past few months, people have been buying cars and appliances, as they take advantage of lower interest rates and replace worn-out models. That has left less room to buy more discretionary items. In a stronger economy, people could do both.

Another issue for traditional retailers: shoppers' continuing shift to online shopping.

David Haskins, 32, of Greenville, N.C. did almost all his buying online this holiday, up from about half last year. He avoided department stores and bought a camera at Best Buy only because it matched an online price that was \$200 cheaper.

Most of his shopping was done at Amazon.com, where he joined as a Prime member to get free shipping.

"When you are looking for something you need, you can just lay in bed and pull up a phone app," Haskins said. But he said he doesn't spend willy-nilly.

"I do a lot of research. I know exactly what I want before I make a purchase."

Haskins' shopping habits played out in the December figures.

Excluding spending on autos, gas and building supplies, retail sales rose a solid 0.7 percent in December from November. But the report shows less spending at traditional holiday outlets. Online sales grew 1.4 percent in December compared with the previous month and 14 percent from last year.

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News

Zappos Turns Baggage Carousel Into Wheel of Fortune-Style Game

Brand Makes Sure Thanksgiving Travel Doesn't Totally Suck for One of Its Biggest Markets

By:

Ann-Christine Diaz

Published: November 27, 2013

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Zappos Airport Game

Thanksgiving eve is notorious as the busiest -- and arguably the most annoying -- travel day of the year. But not so today for some lucky plane passengers in Texas. Online retailer Zappos has decided to bring a bit of fun to the harried commute by turning the baggage claim at George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston into a pop-up Wheel of Fortune-type game.

Today, a carousel has been adorned with Zappos-branded roulette-wheel type slots designating different prizes, including Zappos gift certificates, North Face jackets, Jansport backpacks, Ugg boots and a Kitchen-Aid mixer. Travelers on seven different American Airline flights beginning at 8:30 am will win whatever prize their suitcases land on. Improv actors and a Zappos crew will also be on hand to MC the festivities and make sure the "game" runs smoothly.

Zappos agency [Mullen](#) conceived the idea. Over the years the shop has been asked to create out-of-the-box campaigns that surprise consumers in unexpected places -- like, for example, this [banner ad](#) that unleashed an in-the-buff man into surfers' browsers. "Zappos wants to intercept people in their everyday lives and bring surprise and delight," explained Mullen executive creative director Tim Vaccarino. "So right away we're always looking for something fresh in approach."

Last year at this time, the agency came up with the idea to pay some drivers' tolls in Massachusetts. "This year, we looked for a new take on this brief," Mr. Vaccarino said. "This group of stressed out, tortured traveling souls seemed ripe for the picking. Why not deliver them joy right at the baggage claim?"

Zappos chose to hold the event in Houston because the city represents one of its largest customer markets, a spokeswoman said, and is meant to represent the brand's "thank you" to its some of its most loyal patrons.

The event is sure to bring a smile to weary travelers, but what happens when more than one bag falls on the same slot on the carousel? "If two bags fall on the same prize, both people will get it," said Mr. Vaccarino. Also, no hoarders allowed. For those traveling with more than one suitcase, there's a one-prize-per-winner limit.



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How Black Friday Lost its Mojo

by Rafi Mohammed | 12:45 PM December 4, 2013

Comments (7)



Black Friday 2013 turned out to be, well, a bit more like a Grey Friday. The National Retail Federation estimates that consumers spent \$57.4B over the four-day Thanksgiving holiday weekend, a 2.7% drop from last year's \$59.1B shopping spree. This slide in sales is causing anxiety about the economic recovery possibly sputtering.

But retailers should forget about drawing conclusions based on Black Friday purchases. As a sales event and barometer of consumers' fiscal health, this former indicator of holiday sales is losing relevance.

Last weekend's sales drop shouldn't be shocking –customers are simply shifting more shopping to the web. This results in a substitution effect: fewer sales on Black Friday and more on Cyber Monday. In contrast with the tepid Thanksgiving weekend brick-and-mortar numbers, **IBM estimates** that sales on Cyber Monday jumped by 21%. It's not a big stretch to predict that buying on Cyber Monday will increase next year too, again at the expense of Black Friday.

While the rising popularity of Cyber Monday is one reason for Black Friday's poor showing this year, another reason can be squarely laid on the doorsteps of brick-and-mortar stores themselves. They made the mistake of thinking that *more* was the same as *better*. This year, with Thanksgiving being so late on the calendar, U.S. stores started their "Black Friday" sales days or even weeks ahead of the actual Black Friday. Some, such as Hugo Boss, hosted brief "private sales" claiming to offer the same discounts that would be available on Black Friday. Why fight the crowds if the same discounts can be garnered a few weeks earlier? These early sales caused yet another substitution effect – they siphoned off Black Friday purchases.

I'm reminded of some close friends of mine who host an annual, no-holds barred summer party. It's a great party and because of its success, this year they decided to make it a three-day celebration. The idea sounded great in theory (more party! More friends! More food!) but it didn't work out well in practice. While everyone was happy to see each other on Day 1, we all held back because we knew there were two more days to enjoy. Then by the time Day 3 rolled around, everyone was just tired. Spreading out the fun over three days had not resulted in more net fun — just fun diluted.

Similarly, retailers' extended sales have dimmed the excitement of shopping on Black Friday – the

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chum that used to incite buying frenzies at malls. It's hard to get jazzed about the Black Friday sale of "30% off everything in the store" at Ralph Lauren Outlet stores, for instance, when that sale had already been running for at least a week. This ho-hum shopping experience ushered customers home from the mall early.

But does it matter if Black Friday fades if the shopping season gets peanut-buttered around over several other days? I think it does. One side effect of all of this discount jockeying is that customers lose a call to action. In past years, shoppers could be confident that Black Friday deals were likely to be the best of the season. But this isn't the case anymore. Dire discounts and once-taboo discussions over how early to open on Thanksgiving revealed that retailers are hungry. Rather than marking the starting point of the shopping season and the best deals of the year, this year Black Friday marked a "meh" sort of midpoint to a season that many consumers believe will yield better discounts by year-end.

Will retailers change their ways after learning this year that more is not better? Probably not. Retailers are now stuck in a discounting **prisoner's dilemma**. It's in the best interests of retailers to return to the practice of making Black Friday weekend a once a year blow-out event that provides the best discounts and generates purchase-propelling excitement. However, each retailer also has an incentive to "cheat" by offering discounts in advance. As a result, while Black Friday weekend will always be an important sales weekend for retailers, its mojo is fading.

More blog posts by [Rafi Mohammed](#)
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RAFI MOHAMMED

Rafi Mohammed is a pricing strategy consultant and author of *The 1% Windfall: How Successful Companies Use Price to Profit and Grow*.

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Great post. Actually, with big data analytics tools, retailers can even predict and act on the models with high accuracy to create the level of excitement [aka sales]. They can identify whether the sales need to happen only once or when it needs to be distributed, while providing the experience that customers are looking for, including providing personalized deals on items for the early morning rush on black friday. They can convert customer "Mehs" into "YAYs", and design the journey to convert "YAYs" to further wallet share and market share.

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Happeh • 4 days ago

Black Friday was a dud because there were no deals. I bought one thing. That was all I could find that looked worthwhile.

I did buy a few things on Cyber Monday but only because I had been waiting months and did not want to delay the purchases any longer. Not because the deals were any better than Black Friday.

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Ted Matthews • 4 days ago

Mojo lost and Brands lost. Black Brand Day...the day Brands sacrifice their hard fought, unique Position in favour of cheap- like everyone else.

Brand is what people think of you.

They'll all need 360 days to build their Position back, only to loose it again next Thanksgiving.

We all need to back away from cheap and return to quality and value so we can hire and pay our neighbours.

| • Reply • Share ›



Nash Fulena • 4 days ago

There ought to be a Black Friday market for services rather than solely products!

| • Reply • Share ›



Maggie • 5 days ago

Great analysis, and oh, so true! As a consumer who fell into the Black Friday miasma for a few years, I have to say that my reaction this year was truly "meh." Add to that the frenzy over the "campout" line-sitters and the realization that X store only got 15 of the thing that everyone wants, and you are number 42 in line (or number 142), it gets pretty discouraging. Ten years ago, standing in a friendly line outside a Circuit City, the management came out and gave us coffee. Haven't seen that for a few years, either. Mostly, though, there just aren't that many accessible deals (as opposed to the



2. Be a nice employer.

Example: Costco stays closed on Thanksgiving.

Like Nordstrom, some stores choose [people over profit](#). Costco will not open on Thanksgiving Day to allow their employees time off. While they might sacrifice in revenue, they gain enormously with goodwill from employees, and customers too. This is part of the reason [Costco is the happiest company on earth](#) and frequently listed [as a great place to work](#).

The pressure to capture that early audience continues to escalate, quite possibly, [at the cost of profitability](#) because of such intense cost cutting.

We all know what happens when you have satisfied and fulfilled employees: Turnover is low and happy employees make your customers happy. This more than makes up for the slim profits you might make opening on Thanksgiving Day.

3. Make it easy to give.

Example: Heart of Neiman Marcus makes it easy to combine gift giving with philanthropy. Neiman Marcus caters to a higher income customer base. Given the choice to buy gifts and luxury items that also give back at the same time, wouldn't you choose to do so? Their Heart of Neiman Marcus is a curated collection of 37 items priced from \$32 to \$1,800, 10 percent of which will be given to a local cause directed at making the arts more accessible to youth.

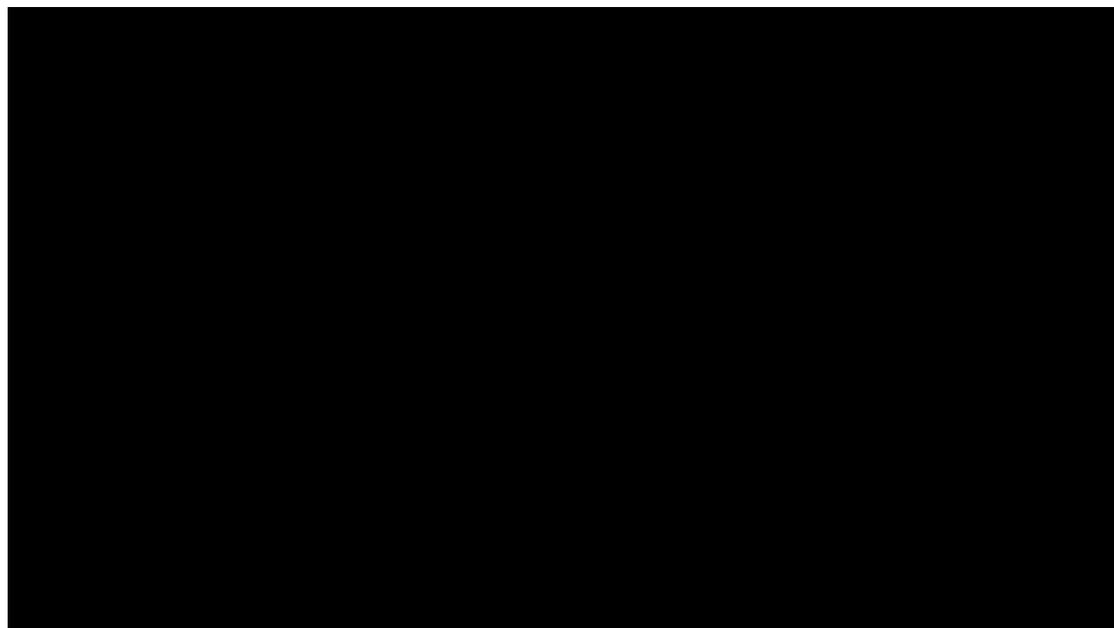
4. Give the gift of a good story.

Example: Salomon inspires with touching stories.

I'm a big fan of Salomon. I've been running on their shoes for at least 10 years. [Salomon's Trail Running TV](#) doesn't sell

shoes. It inspires you to get out and run. Whether you are already are a runner or not, I challenge you to watch this and tell me it doesn't tug at you emotionally, and make you want to pick up the sport.

Find a way to showcase your brand advocates and stars. If this series changes a few lives and gets only a few people to get into running, or to run more, then they have given an amazing gift.



5. Create campaigns that highlight your customers

Example: American Express promotes its own customers with [Small Business Saturday](#)

Of course, American Express succeeds if their customers succeed and grow. Small Business Saturday is a great way to thank their customer base by using their resources (resources their individual customers don't have.) to encourage shoppers to patronize small business.

A website provides tons of resources to small business owners to promote their own business and to organize small shop districts to encourage activity. Consumers are given a \$10 credit when they shop at a participating shop and pay with American Express.

Although the program hasn't always been executed flawlessly, the idea behind it is a good one for brands to take apply to their own business models.

What other ways can you thank your customers?

[For more marketing advice from Lisa Gerber, click here.](#)

Image: [wwworks](#) (Creative Commons)



MOST EFFICIENT BLACK FRIDAY AD CAMPAIGN? WALMART'S

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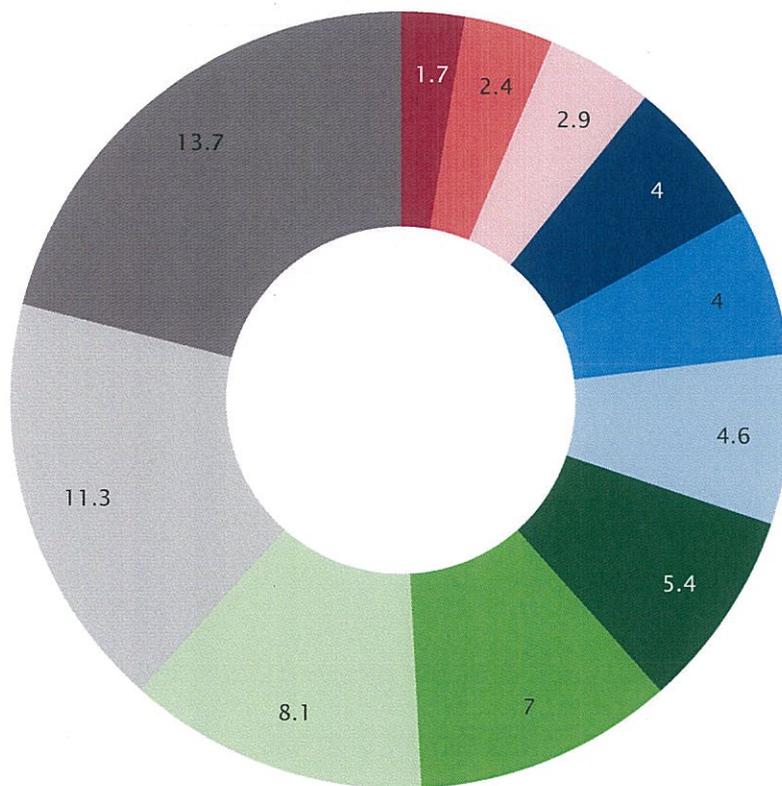
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Jon Swallen (<http://us.kantar.com/experts/jon-swallen/>)
Chief Research Officer, Kantar Media Intelligence
North America

12/04/2013

Thanksgiving weekend "Cost per Visitor Share" (in millions of dollars)



- Walmart
- Target
- Home Depot
- Lowe's
- Best Buy
- K-Mart
- Kohls
- JC Penney
- Macy's
- Radio Shack
- Sears Roebuck

Kantar Media, Placed

Retail giant beats competitors in new metric, "Cost per Visitor Share"

Advertising is critical to retailers' strategies for drawing customers during the hyper-competitive holiday shopping season. The battle for market share is already tough enough, with brick-and-mortar stores battling online sellers who make it easy for shoppers to compare deals and avoid crowds. This year brings the additional

challenges of fewer shopping days in the peak Thanksgiving-to-Christmas sales period and gloomy forecasts for consumer spending on gifts.

As a result, retailers spent millions on advertising in the run-up to 2013 Black Friday sales events, hoping to get shoppers to visit them first on the big holiday weekend. Who were the winners and losers in this slugfest? Which retail advertisers got a strong ROI in the form of customer traffic and which ones lagged?

Kantar Media Ad Intelligence and location-driven insights specialist Placed Inc. merged their respective data on advertising expenditures and in-store visitor counts to create a new metric, the "Cost Per Visitor Share," for evaluating and comparing the results achieved by the top national retail chains over the four-day Thanksgiving weekend. This metric provides new insight into how offline advertising helps drive in-store customer traffic.

For the analysis, Kantar Media tabulated retailers' ad spending on broadcast and cable TV for the period of November 3-27 (the day before Thanksgiving) based on our syndicated ad monitoring data. Placed then used its opt-in panel of smartphone-enabled consumers to track their locations and the retail stores they visited from Thanksgiving Day through the following Sunday. From the panel data, the top 50 retail destinations were identified and the total number of unique visitors to these 50 stores were then used as the base for subsequent calculations.

In the heated competition among department stores and mass merchandisers, Walmart invested more than twice as much in TV advertising as any of its rivals-but earned an enormous share of retail visitor traffic in return. Among the universe of people who visited a Top 50 retailer during the weekend, 34% patronized a Walmart location, the highest incidence for any retailer. As a result, Walmart had the lowest visitor acquisition cost in this survey, spending \$1.7 million per share point.

To put Walmart's 34% visitor rate in perspective, however, in the same four days from the prior week (November 21-24) it had just over a 30% share of all retail visitors nationwide. Against that benchmark, Walmart only saw a 4-point bump over the holiday weekend, although against a much larger base of total shoppers.

Target had the second-best ratio at \$2.4 million per share point. The company spent \$28.0 million on TV advertising leading up to the weekend and was a destination for 11.9% of the retail visitors.

At the other end of the spectrum, Sears Roebuck spent \$13.7 million per visitor share point, more than eight times the rate that Walmart achieved. The mass merchandisers in our study-Walmart, Target and Kmart-all enjoyed lower costs per visitor than the full-line department store brands.

Among the big-box home improvement stores, Home Depot and Lowes spent nearly identical amounts on TV advertising leading up to Thanksgiving weekend, but Home Depot had a sizable advantage in visitors to its stores. As a result, Home Depot spent \$2.9 million per visitor share point (the third lowest among the 11 retailers in this analysis) versus Lowes' \$4.0 million.

Consumer electronics are always a popular item on consumers' shopping list for Black Friday deals, as reflected in the figures for Best Buy. It had a 6.2% share of visitors over the holiday weekend, third best among the Top 50 retailers. With a \$25 million TV budget pre-Thanksgiving, Best Buy spent \$4.0 million per share point. Radio Shack, with smaller stores and a less abundant selection of electronics products, spent \$9.0 million on TV advertising and had a 0.8% share of total visitors, for an effective rate of \$11.3 million per visitor share point.

Source: Kantar Media (<http://www.kantarmedia.com/>)

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KFC, all is forgiven

02 Dec 2013

BBH's Christmas ad for KFC is 2 1/2 minutes of song but before you grimace, read just one of its lines, *"Typically I hate your guts, and I'd try to kill you but, one of everybody's vices, is 11 herbs and spices."*

While adpeople all over the world are trying to fill warring tribes (read, families) with Christmas gooeyness so they will buy lots of Christmas goodies, KFC gets real.

The spot is called *KFC Xmas – come together*. Sure it looks and feels like an ep from Glee, but Glee is damn funny too. There's even a KFC choir singing. And some characters like people each of us actually knows, putting aside their spats and spite to share chicken friend in good knows what and reconstituted mash in gravy.

It went to air on ITV during The X Factor in the U.K. on Saturday 30th November, taking up almost the entire break and is the first ever brand campaign that KFC has produced for Christmas.

The social media campaign promises to be **reeeally** interesting. It's a Twitter campaign in which customers tweet about someone with whom they'd like to make peace over the holiday season. The winning entrant will get the chance to resolve his/her conflict - in a TV ad, which will air during The X Factor final on 14th December and feature the KFC choir singing a new song written for the occasion.

The spot was written by Matt Moreland and David Kolbusz. Kolbusz was also one of the art directors, the other being Chris Clarke. Tim Godsall directed the ad through Biscuit Filmworks.

McDonald's, on the other hand, has opted for a heart tugger, encouraging people to visit its restaurants whether they like Christmas or hate it.

The 60 second Leo Burnett ad called *Somewhere near you* looks in through McDonald's windows to show different groups of people eating in McDonald's, while snow falls outside.

The voiceover describes McDonald's in rhyme as a place where people can either celebrate or escape from the holiday season, leading up to the line, "There's a McDonald's for everyone at Christmas."

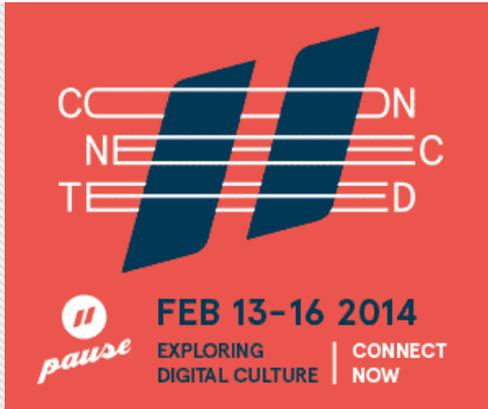
Aaahhh, sigh.

For the McDonald's shoot, the production company had to recreate snowfall while the rest of the area around Chapel Market was being mopped up after St Jude's storm, and the Christmas decorations used prevented council workers from erecting the real Chapel Market Christmas lights. Sixty-two year old, Sue Parsons complained, Sue Parsons, 62, said: "I'm a bit miffed that McDonald's is shut because I've just come all the way here for my lunch. This snow has made me feel nice and Christmassy though." Merry Chrostmass.

McDonald's got its ad out one week before KFC. The spot directed by Neil Gorringe of Moxie Pictures is on air for 8 weeks from November 23rd.


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Mall of the future? eBay's new storefronts can gather your data

The e-commerce site partners with brands and one of the world's largest shopping center companies to show consumers a new kind of mall, one that melds online with offline.



by Donna Tam | November 30, 2013 4:00 AM PST

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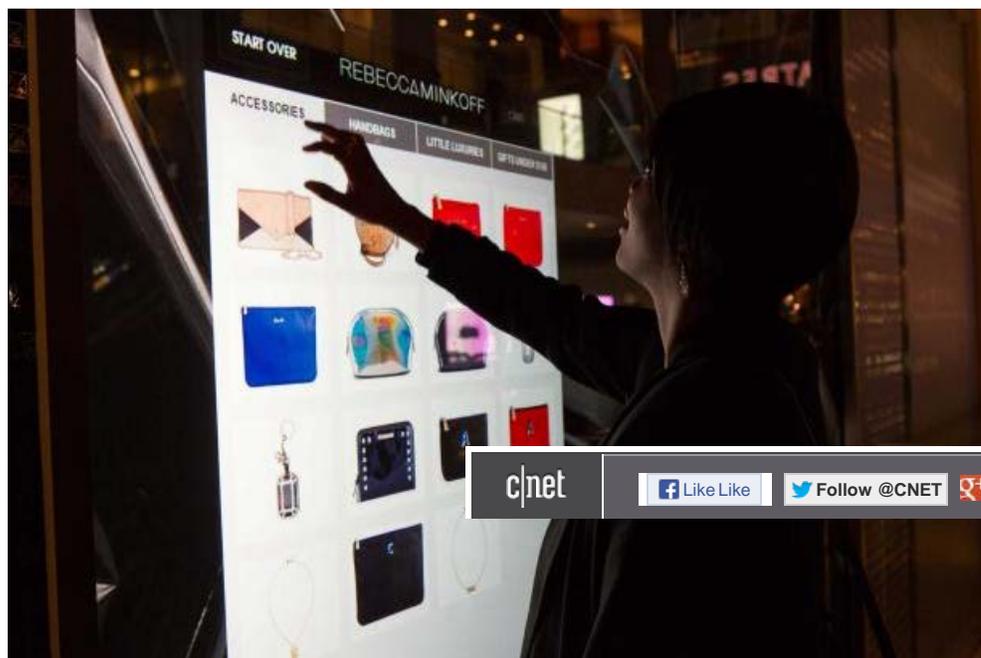
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A woman tries out the Rebecca Minkoff digital storefront at the Westfield Shopping Centre in San Francisco. (Credit: eBay)

SAN FRANCISCO -- Uri Minkoff, CEO of fashion brand [Rebecca Minkoff](#), climbed through an opening in a wall leading to an empty retail space inside the [Westfield Shopping Centre](#) in downtown San Francisco. It was an unexpected sight: The stylish Minkoff, sporting a slim-fitted blazer and designer jeans, checking out the dark room, construction material strewn about.

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But Minkoff doesn't care about the room itself; he cares about the entrance, where there is a computer setup that, he hopes, will boost his sales this holiday season. That's where potential shoppers will touch a piece of glass, iPad style, to shop.

This giant touchscreen, [created by eBay](#), is the focal point of this new digital storefront. eBay converted two large panels of the glass into a touchscreen that lets shoppers browse virtually through a selection of products and then make a purchase. Minkoff stood inside the empty store, which currently isn't rented out, observing the back end of the setup. People on the other side would stop and tap on the screen, their hands creating small, moving shadows on the translucent wall.

Minkoff's digital storefront, along with ones for [Toms Shoes](#) and [Sony](#), serve as the centerpiece of Westfield and eBay's vision of the future of shopping -- one where you can shop anytime, anywhere, and on any device. That a brick-and-mortar mall and an online auction-and-market site would join together in this initiative underscores the blurring of lines between the physical and virtual worlds, which both sides believe will ultimately serve the consumer better through new technology.

“ We're going to take this technology and the idea of using glass and move it out of the mall -- on the bus, train, at the airport. Anywhere people are waiting, congregating, or milling about.”
--Steve Yankovich, eBay's vice president of innovation and new ventures

"My goal is '[Minority Report](#),'" said Steve Yankovich, eBay's vice president of innovation and new ventures, referring to the 2002 movie that features predictive technology and Tom Cruise using hand gestures to control computer actions.

For a brand like Minkoff, which largely sells through big department stores, opting for what is essentially an interactive billboard over an actual store is a relatively safe way to test the waters for a larger retail presence.

The digital storefront is part repurposed, part custom technology. What consumers see is a large digital image with a touchscreen area showing the products for sale. After customers choose a product, they enter their mobile number (the entered digits are hidden, but the touchpad is fairly visible, so if you're not careful people around you can see you entering your number), and complete their purchase on their smartphones.

What makes the display possible are layers of projection film and touch foil adhered to the glass, as well as a custom-made Sony 4K [projector](#) and eBay's proprietary software running on a computer out of sight, behind the glass. Induction speakers cause the glass to vibrate, turning it into speakers. This lets users hear sounds when they make contact with the screen.

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The storefronts are customizable in look and size. The Rebecca Minkoff display looked like it was made of two glass doors, and it had four rotating images. Sony, which also has a small presence in the mall one floor down, decided to create a display that took over an entire wall and had sensors programmed to sync the movement of its product images with the movement of anyone standing in front of it.

The projection film allows for crisp images, and the touch foil, a thinly wired adhesive skin that's normally used on top of bulkier consoles, allows for accuracy in a shopper's touch. The 4K projector, typically used in research-and-development labs to examine detailed images of things like motor parts or circuitry, produces sharp images without blinding the viewer.

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30 best iPad games



Trying to figure out which iPad games to buy with your hard-earned dough? Here's a look at our current top 30 favorites.

[Check it out](#)

While the tech behind the glass touchscreens is definitely cool, the really exciting part for retailers is the the top of the display, with its several black squares. The squares are Kinect sensors, using infrared to monitor customers' movements within a 15-foot range, and gathering valuable data for retailers on what actually catches a customer's eye or will make people stop in their tracks all together.

"It's such a completely different way of thinking about retail," said Healey Cypher, who leads eBay's retail innovation group. Traditionally, retailers don't have any hard metrics to tell whether a store display is doing its job to entice customers. What's more, the digital storefronts also track shopping activity, the same as a Web site would: How much time consumers spent browsing the products, which products they clicked on, what they ended up purchasing in the end, whether they wanted to have it delivered to their homes, or, in Sony's case, pick it up elsewhere in the mall.

Coupled with the physical foot traffic data, the futuristic glass walls give retailers a more complete picture of their customers' spending habits.

Mall of the future? (pictures)

1-2 of 8



Minkoff --who is actually a techie himself, having founded a [software company](#) before taking over the business side of [his sister's fashion brand](#) -- said retail brands like his could use the data before investing in a physical storefront, to test which locations work well for their products. Inversely, the mall could use it to test out retailers before leasing them a space. His brand is mainly carried in retailers like Bloomingdale's and Nordstrom, but he has three stores in Asia and is opening the company's first US flagship store in New York this spring. Having a digital storefront could help Minkoff decide where he may want his next physical location.

eBay did a similar setup for [Kate Spade's pop-up stores in New York](#) and the retailer used the data gathered from the storefronts to decide where else to open popup stores.

"The metrics were so huge, they opened it in a place where they wouldn't have," Cypher said, adding that the shops showed a definite correlation between the data and the sales made. "One of our concerns was people using it only because it's cool tech, but what we found was that it's about the brand."

eBay is continuing to improve on the shopping experience and the speed of the setup. While the Kate Spade storefront took about a week to set up, Cypher's team can now put one together in less than three days. The storefronts aren't permanent; the ones at the Westfield mall come down after January 12. Yankovich said digital storefronts are a more attractive option for malls that have any open spots for rent because they're easy and fast to set up, and more attractive than the placeholders malls currently use. But he doesn't want to stop at malls.

"We're going to take this technology and the idea of using glass and move it out of the mall - on the bus, train, at the airport. Anywhere where people are waiting, congregating, or milling about," he said.

For Westfield, the digital storefront is just a sampling of what's to come.

Kevin McKenzie, who leads [Westfield Labs](#) -- a department created by the company to think of ways tech can be used to keep shoppers at malls -- knows that malls have to adapt technology to stay in the game. And it's not about stopping retailers from selling things online.

"Consumers don't think about offline and online, they're just like 'I just need to buy something,'" he said. "So, we don't get caught up in the brick and mortar and online. We just look at our buildings as real estate to facilitate commerce, online and offline. I think the whole industry is starting to wake up to that."



Kevin McKenzie, Westfield Labs' chief digital officer, demonstrates how to make a purchase on a digital storefront.

(Credit: eBay)

McKenzie sees the mall as a platform, much like eBay except in physical form. And as a platform, the mall has to provide an experience that will compel shoppers to use it. That includes attracting quality food vendors, and figuring out ways to serve consumers before, during, and after they're at the mall.

"It used to be that years ago, before online, you were inspired by coming to the mall. You couldn't discover anything beforehand because the Internet didn't exist," he said. To mimic that kind of Internet discovery, Westfield is piloting searchable mall directories in Australia and Europe. These digital directories don't just show where stores are, they can go into detail, letting a shopper know where a specific type of product is available throughout the mall. In December, Westfield is rolling out infrared-enabled sensors in the parking lot, so people can reserve specific parking spaces through their phone before they arrive.

While McKenzie admits that he doesn't know if any of these things will keep shoppers coming in, he's excited to try. And, though he said it's not about online or offline anymore, he's thinking about what a mall can do outside of the digital box.

"What advantages do we have?" he said. "What can we do that Amazon can't do?"

Topics: [E-commerce](#) **Tags:** [sony](#), [shopping mall](#), [rebecca minkoff](#), [toms shoes](#), [digital storefront](#), [san francisco](#), [touchscreen](#), [eBay](#)



About Donna Tam

Donna Tam covers Amazon and other fun stuff for CNET News. She is a San Francisco native who enjoys feasting, merrymaking, checking her Gmail and reading her Kindle.



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Merry Marketing: 7 of the Best Holiday Campaigns of 2013

by [Matthew Bushery](#)



December 20, 2013 at 8:00 AM

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The end of the year typically entails some last-minute Christmas shopping, finalizing plans to see family and friends, and -- if you're marketers like us -- [prepping for next year's campaigns](#). It also means we get to enjoy some of the most heartwarming and humorous marketing efforts we'll see all year.



From commercials, to interactive websites, to [social media contests](#), there's always a fair share of top-notch marketing going on in November and December -- and this year proved as much.

Check out some of this season's memorable and unique campaigns from both sizable brands and small ones that epitomize how to do holiday marketing right.

7 Great Holiday Marketing Campaigns of 2013

1) The Santa Brand Book

"Santa is a Concept, not an idea. It's an Emotion, not a feeling. It's both Yesterday and Today. It's Tomorrow as well." That's how this ingenious [brand book from communications consulting firm Quietroom](#) begins. And believe me when I say the rest of it is just as kooky and wonderfully facetious.

Case in point: Take a look below at this "brand house" that details the core components of Old Saint Nick's brand strategy. I ... I can't even.

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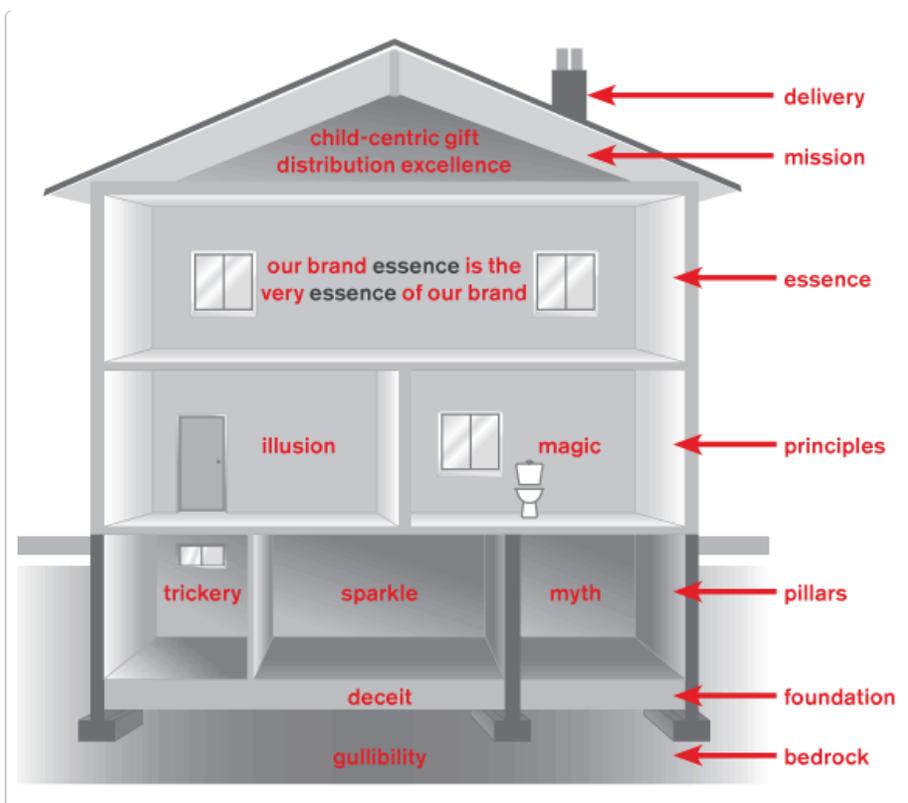


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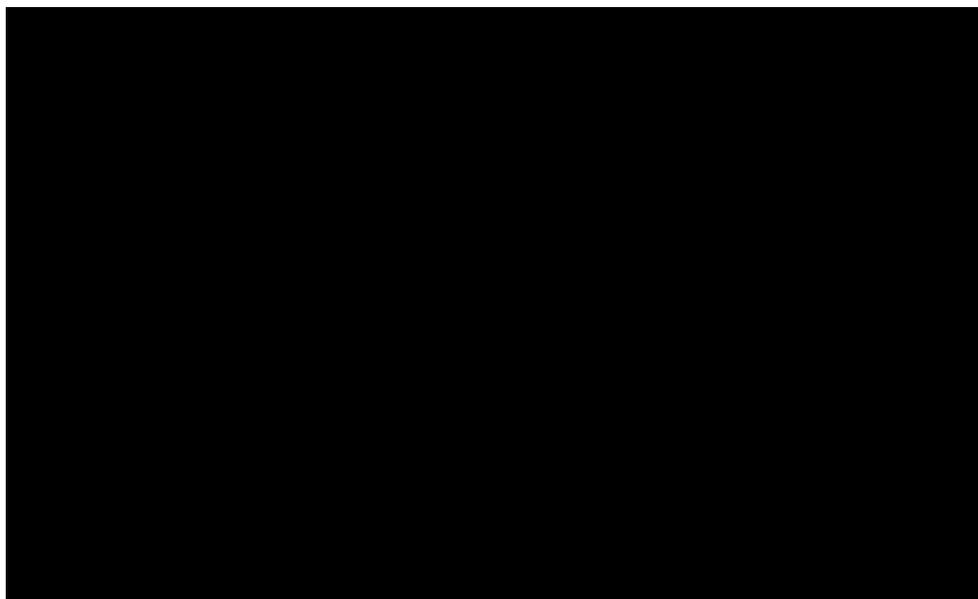
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2) Apple Holiday Commercial

Oh, Apple -- how you've done it again. Say what you will about the tech giant, but hot damn, do they know how to churn out one wonderful ad after another.

The streak stays alive with this touching spot that, once again, shows the company's a step ahead of the competition when it comes to showing the usefulness of its products and adding in that human element that draws people in.

(The use of Cat Power's rendition of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" certainly bolsters that personal touch Apple is so well-known for adding to its commercials.)



3) Coke Zero Sweater Generator

Interactive sites are becoming more popular each and every day, and thus, it's no surprise that some well-known brands are jumping on board with the marketing concept. Take Coca-Cola for instance.

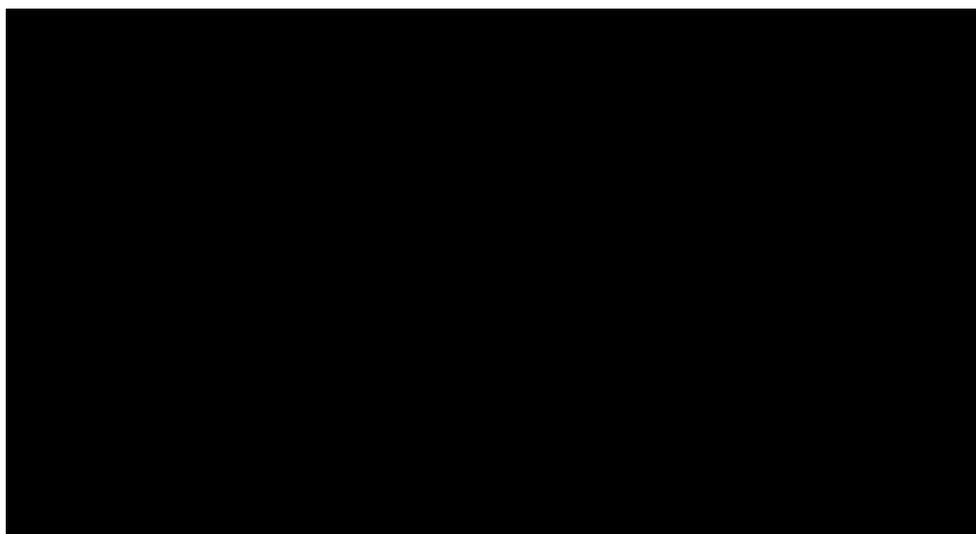
With this [Sweater Generator](#), it's clear the soda-maker certainly gets that holiday marketing doesn't need to focus on its product and should be warm, inviting, and personable.



4) Netflix "Fireplace for Your Home" Trailer

Think of where Netflix was just a couple years ago, when it announced its ill-fated plans for a second service called [Qwikster](#) (which led to substantial backlash and some poor PR). Today, though, it's a whole different story.

In addition to awesome original programming (if you're not watching *House of Cards*, you should be), it's nailing every aspect of its marketing. Want proof? Look no further than the fake trailer below.



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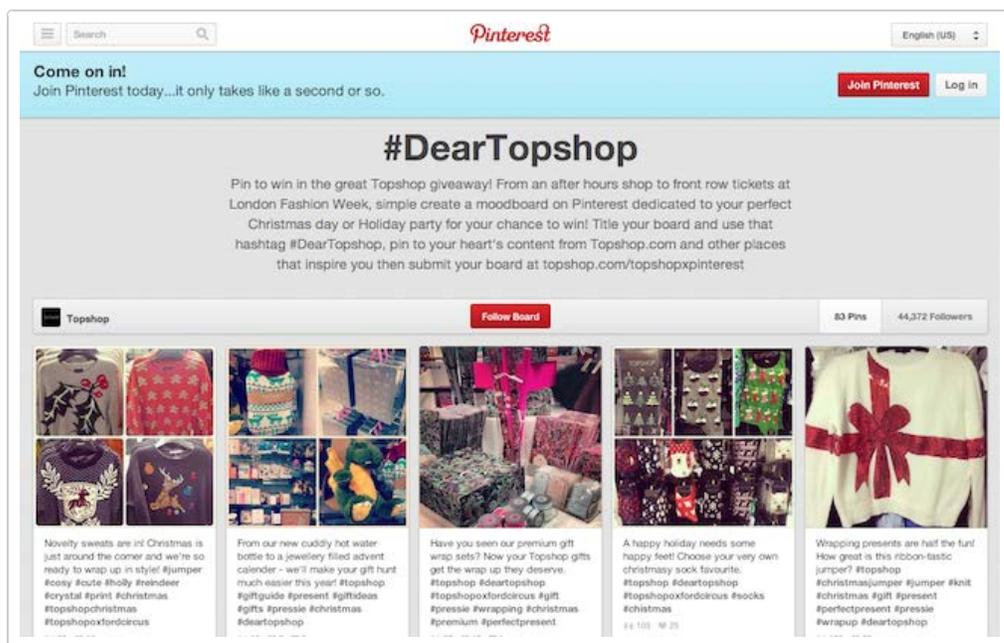
CRAVE MORE CONTENT?



5) Topshop Pinterest Contest

Conducting a social media contest is a premier way to draw visitors to your accounts on Facebook and Pinterest. One company that seems to have hit the mark with its own contest is the [clothing retailer Topshop](#).

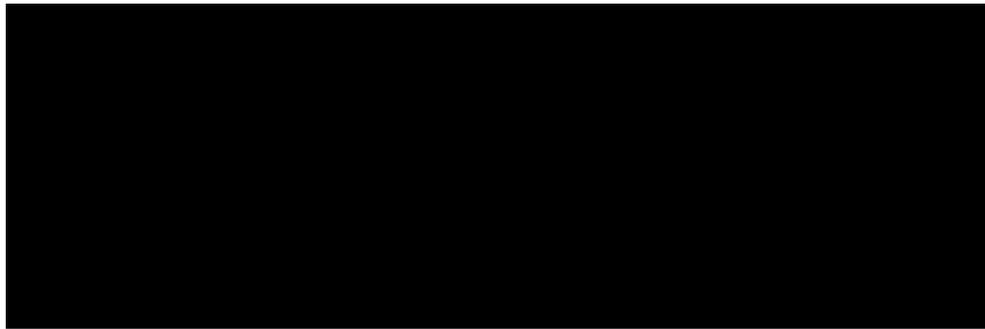
With a contest like the one the company created around its #DearTopshop hashtag, in which users can win various prizes by pinning Topshop items to their boards, brands can secure not only hefty amounts of traffic to their social sites, but also garner loyal followers and even customers.



6) John Lewis Christmas Advertisement

Another sentimental promo in the vein of Apple's aforementioned ad comes from John Lewis and harkens back to the days of the old-school, animated Christmas specials (*A Charlie Brown Christmas*, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, etc.).

The retailer certainly worked some magic with this spot, which has generated some considerable (and warranted) buzz. And once again, here's another promo using music to perfection -- this time, it's Lily Allen with a lighter version of Keane's "Somewhere Only We Know." Well done, John Lewis marketers. Well done.



7) Uncommon Goods

Though not as "sexy" as minute-long commercials, interactive sites, or social contests, good-ol' [email marketing](#) is still a more-than-viable option for marketers around the holidays. Uncommon Goods understood this, as evidenced by this appealing email below (which actually displays as an animated GIF in your inbox).

It's not only clear and concise in its promotional copy, but the brand also effectively relays the benefits of shopping with the company with its "urgency" angle: 'We offer quick shipping, just in time for the 25th.' Plus, the animated GIF shows you when you can place your order to receive your gifts in time for Christmas.



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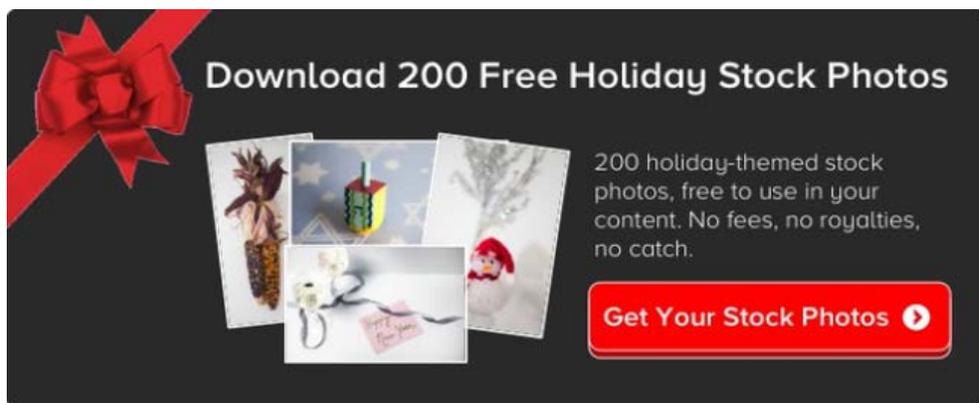
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Order your uncommon gifts by Dec. 19*,
& Standard Shipping will get it there by Dec. 24.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	It's not too late (to ship it, ship it good)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	GIFTS FOR WIVES →
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	GIFTS FOR HUSBANDS →
15	16	17	18	19 GIFT IT	20	21	TOP RATED GIFTS →
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What other types of great holiday marketing have you seen this season?



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The advertisement features a dark background with a large red ribbon graphic on the left. In the center, there are several small images of holiday-themed stock photos, including a pinecone, a gift box, a snow globe, and a Santa Claus figure. To the right of these images is the text '200 holiday-themed stock photos, free to use in your content. No fees, no royalties, no catch.' Below this text is a red button with the text 'Get Your Stock Photos' and a right-pointing arrow.

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Written by [Matthew Bushery](#)

Matthew Bushery is the Associate Editor of Inbound Hub. A marketing professional in the Boston area since 2010, Matthew helps produce, edit, and publish a variety of content for the blog. You can follow him on Twitter at [@MatthewBushery](#).

[Emma](#)

Saturday, 21 December 2013 12:22:24 AM

I'm surprised the WestJet ad where an entire plane of people got the gift they asked for wasn't mentioned at all here! It even got lots of play on the national news in America despite the fact that WestJet is a low-cost Canadian airline that services only some cities in the US--most of them warm-weather destinations for snowbirds.

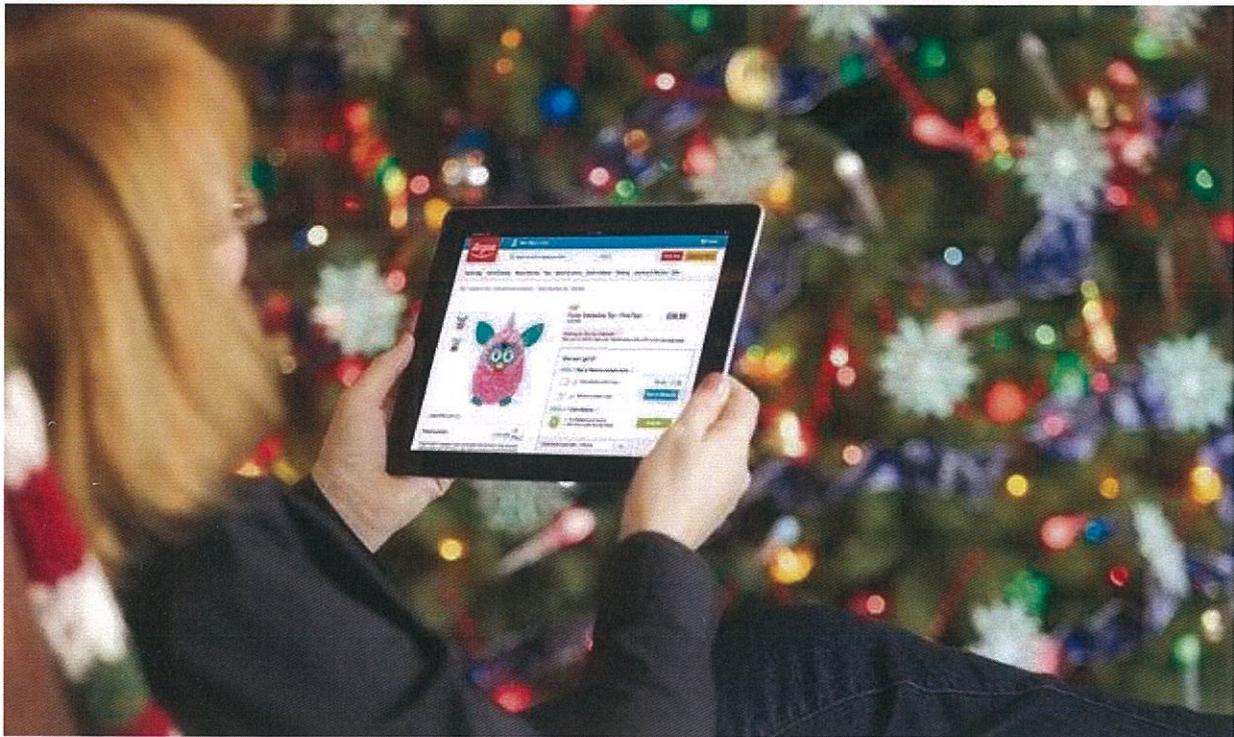
Much like the Apple ad, it's also inspired little swellings of emotion. (All the best holiday ads do, don't they?)

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Mobile data use surged 173% during Christmas

Sponsored by Digital Arts Network (<http://www.digitalartsnetwork.com.sg/>)

0 0 1 0 0

Globe Telecom reported a 173% jump in mobile data use during the Christmas holidays, reflecting a huge demand for mobile internet services and rapid changes on how Filipinos communicate.

In comparison, voice and text, what once the norm for Filipinos in regards to greeting loved ones and friends, grew a mere of 15% and 1%, respectively, year-on-year.

In a statement, Globe chief technical adviser Robert Tan attributed the lackluster growth to messaging alternatives such as Facebook, Twitter, Skype and Viber now made more accessible via mobile devices.

"There has been a notable change in customers' behavior in sending holiday greetings as they now turn to their smartphones, tablets and computers to send Christmas greetings through online applications such as Facebook, Twitter and other messaging applications."

"The increase in data traffic reflects the steady rise in demand for mobile Internet services, growing popularity of smartphones, tablets and online social applications as well as the expanded coverage of the company's fourth-generation (4G) infrastructure through the combined technology of long-term evolution (LTE) and high-speed packet access plus (HSPA+)," Globe said.

Globe has been aggressively beefing up its mobile internet services with key partnership with some of the internet's biggest names.

Last October, Globe gave its over 36 million subscribers free access to Facebook on mobile phones for the next three months through an exclusive deal with the social media network. In another partnership, Globe chose the Globe as the first telco in the world to test Google Free Zone, which allows users to access Gmail, Google+ and Google search for free on their mobile phones.

In the nine months to September, Globe's mobile data revenues accounted for 56% or P30 billion of its total mobile service revenues, an increase of 16% from P25.8 billion a year earlier.

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More than 750 retailers to take part in Wednesday's Free Shipping Day

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More than 750 retailers are participating in Free Shipping Day on Wednesday. (David Paul Morris / Bloomberg)

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Photos: Top toys for 2013

By Tiffany Hsu
December 16, 2013 | 12:22 p.m.

Fewer than 10 days remain until Christmas, and retailers are trying to make the most of the holiday crunch time by luring online shoppers with free delivery offers.

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Cyber Monday was biggest online shopping day ever, data firm says



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Wednesday is Free Shipping Day, a last-minute consumption craze initiated in 2008 by entrepreneur Luke Knowles. Organizers say it's the last day for shoppers to order gifts online and have them sent — for free — by Christmas Eve.

This year, more than 750 retailers have signed up to participate. Major names — REI, Neiman Marcus, Bergdorf Goodman and J.C. Penney, among them — are included, as are a slew of small Main Street vendors.

In the next few days, brick-and-mortar retailers will be slammed with some of the heaviest crowds of the year. Local shopping centers such as the Grove and the Americana at Brand were swarming with shoppers this past weekend.

Ken Perkins, founder of Retail Metrics Inc., said many companies have spent the holidays offering steep discounts, boosting marketing spending, expanding price-matching offers and layaway programs and investing heavily in online infrastructure.

"There is no question that certain segments of retail are under severe stress as they fight tooth-and-nail for every dollar," he wrote in a note to clients over the weekend.

An increasing number of Americans are doing their presents-purchasing on the Internet.

Monday is expected to be the busiest day of the year for the U.S. Postal Service, which projects that it will process 607 million pieces of mail. On an average day, the USPS deals with 528 million pieces of mail; the number rises to 545 million a day during the holidays.

The agency said it expects that 420 million packages will be delivered during the season — a 12% boost from the same period last year.

Shoppers at certain retailers can continue buying gifts online into next week, with delivery ensured by Christmas.

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Best Buy is offering express shipping through 10 a.m. PST on Sunday. Customers who order online by 4 p.m. local time on Christmas Eve can pick up items in stores.

Express shipping of in-stock merchandise from Macy's closes at 2 p.m. PST on Sunday; Nordstrom is offering free standard shipping on all merchandise and gift cards through 8 p.m. PST on Saturday.

A survey from Chase Blueprint found that 35% of Americans said they do most of their shopping at the last minute. The same holds true for 42% of younger shoppers ages 25 to 34.

Last-minute shoppers plan to spend \$799 on average, compared with the \$854 spent on average by shoppers who complete their gift-buying earlier.

But consulting firm Capgemini warns retailers to ensure that their shipping promises are kept. Data from the firm suggests that 89% of Americans are less likely to shop with a retailer down the line if an item is delivered late. And if shoppers looking for a specific holiday gift don't find it on a retailer's website, nearly three in 10 won't buy the item at all.

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Martin, Laura-AUS

From: Bird, Jon
Sent: Tuesday, 3 December 2013 11:19 AM
To: Martin, Laura-AUS
Subject: FW: Men's Cyber Monday Savings

For Holiday Wrap

From: NORDSTROM MEN'S SHOP <nordstrom@em.NORDSTROM.com>
Reply-To: NORDSTROM MEN'S SHOP <reply@em.nordstrom.com>
Date: Tuesday, December 3, 2013 3:20 AM
To: Jon Bird <Jon.Bird@ideaworks.com.au>
Subject: Men's Cyber Monday Savings

Great prices on shirts, coats, sweaters, accessories & more.
View this e-mail [in web browser](#).

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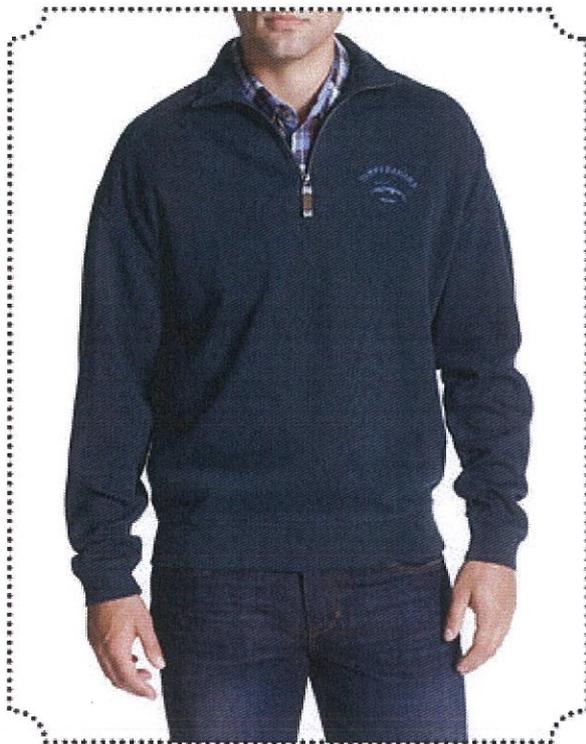
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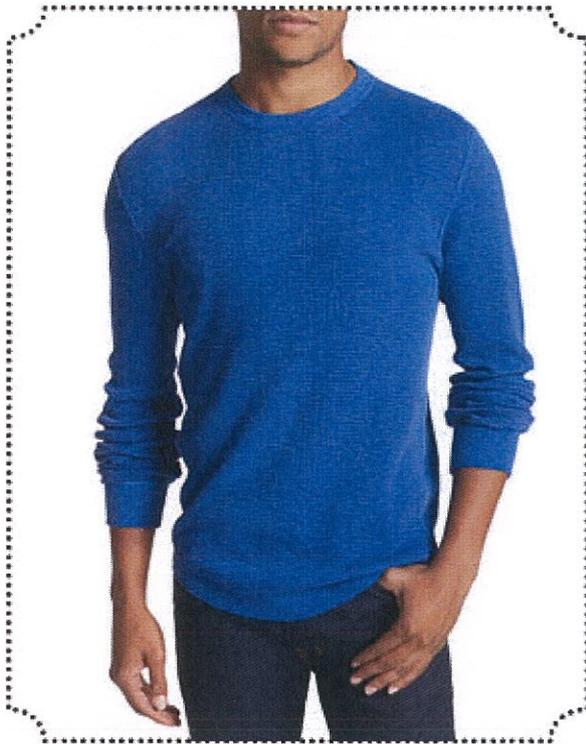
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By **PAUL ZIOBRO** and **SUZANNE KAPNER** [CONNECT](#)
 Updated Nov. 29, 2013 11:30 p.m. ET



PRICE CHECK: A shopper at Miami's Dolphin Mall scours her phone for bargains on Friday. *J Pat Carter/Associated Press*

Brick-and-mortar retailers mounted a furious defense on Black Friday to head off incursions into one of the industry's biggest shopping days by such online rivals as [Amazon.com](#) Inc. AMZN +1.79%

The tactics were evident in stores and on websites as millions of holiday shoppers lined up to spend their dollars on highly touted deals.



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Chains like [Macy's Inc.](#) **M -0.52%** opened on Thanksgiving for the first time, and giants like [Wal-Mart Stores Inc.](#) **WMT +0.10%** and [Target](#) **TGT -0.75%** moved their deals earlier Thursday, shifts intended to retrieve valuable shopping time that had been ceded to e-commerce, where the doors never close.

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Holiday Shopping and Retail Sales 2013

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On day of frenzy at the mall, the real fight was online. @pziobro + @SuzanneKapner with an A1 #BlackFriday breakdown

[Best Buy Co.](#) **BBY +2.37%** kept some deals hidden until customers showed up at stores, and retailers put more deals on the Web to better compete with Amazon on its own playing field.

In the early predawn hours of Thanksgiving, Jason Goldberger huddled with his team on the 20th floor of a Target Corp. building in Minneapolis to make sure everything was ready at the chain's most important store: Target.com.

The stakes were high. Online shoppers accounted for 40% of the \$59 billion in sales racked up over the four-day Black Friday weekend last year, up from 23% in 2006, according to the National Retail Federation. Store traffic this year has been

spluggish amid slow growth in consumer spending.



Shoppers in New York, among the millions nationwide Friday who spent their money on highly touted deals. *Reuters*

watched measure. Once the deals went live, orders began piling up at about twice the rate of a year ago, Mr. Goldberger said.

The results offered a measure of relief. During the first 17 days of November this year, store traffic declined 4.8% from the same period the year before, according to Retail Next, which analyzes more than nine million shopping trips nationwide within 450 stores.

Photos: Shoppers Seek Black Friday Deals

Meanwhile, online shopping is set to rise, with 51% of shoppers surveyed by Nielsen planning to buy something over the Internet on Friday, up from 38% last year. That compared with 48% of consumers who said they planned to visit a big-box store like Target or Wal-Mart.

Andrea Bailey is one of those online



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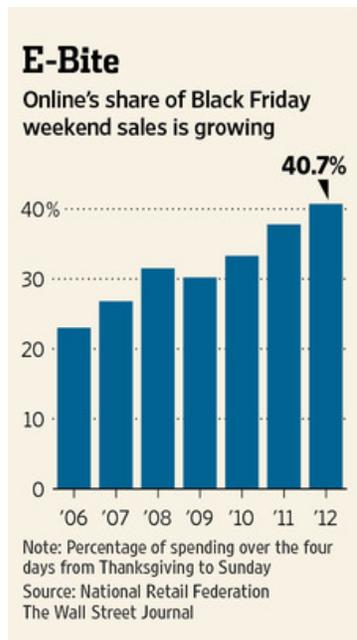


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The aisles at this Cambridge, Mass., Best Buy, which opened at 1 a.m. Friday, were filled with shoppers well before the normal opening time. *Brian Snyder/Reuters*

shoppers, but she wasn't on Amazon. Around 2 a.m. Thursday morning, she was sitting at a laptop in her living room in Lexington, Ky., refreshing Best Buy's website. When she finally got through, she bought a \$99 Kindle Fire, made by Amazon, for her 8-year-old son.

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After a couple of hours of sleep, Ms. Bailey continued her shopping spree, buying sweaters and Christmas pajamas for her 5-year-old daughter and dress shirts for her husband from Macys.com, some [Disney](http://Disney.com) Infinity characters for her son from Toysrus.com and a new printer from the Sam's Club website.

Altogether, Ms. Bailey spent nearly \$400 before noon. She finds it easier to browse websites run by brick-and-mortar stores than to deal with Amazon's overwhelming number of options, she said: "If I go on Amazon and look at videogames, holy moly, my brain hurts."

Such big retailers as Wal-Mart and Target continue to struggle to keep up with Amazon on the Web. Despite years of effort, online sales still typically account for only around 2% of sales for the two chains.

But both companies are investing heavily to catch up. Target expects to spend more on technology next year than it does building and upgrading new stores. This year, it made virtually all of its Black Friday deals available online.



What's News: Wal-Mart and Target report strong Thanksgiving day traffic in stores and online. China sends fighter jets into disputed air-defense zone. Netherlands loses its triple-A credit rating. Joanne Po reports.

Paul Gainer, executive vice president of Disney Retail, said Friday he now checks his mobile phone for hourly updates on online sales. "This year, online sales on Thanksgiving have been above expectations," he said, "while store sales are in line with last year."

The competition for retailers is Amazon, which for a number of years offered deals in the days leading up to Black Friday to lure customers away from brick-and-mortar rivals. This year, the company added new discounts to its site as frequently as every 10 minutes to keep customers glued to the website in the hunt for bargains.

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Friday Sales Jump Across the Atlantic

What's That? An Amazon Store?

Sales by third-party retailers on Amazon rose 31% on Thursday and 25% through noon on Friday, according to [ChannelAdvisor](#), [ECOM +0.29%](#) which produces software that lets retailers sell via websites like Amazon.com and eBay.com.

Retailers, meanwhile, tried new tactics to get consumers to buy in person.

Wal-Mart said it had first planned to offer deals in its stores at 8 p.m. Thursday night. But competitive pressure and customer demand prompted the bargains to start at 6 p.m. The giant discounter said more than 22 million shoppers visited on Thanksgiving, ringing up 10 million transactions between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. that day, roughly in line with last year.

Toys "R" Us opened even earlier on Thanksgiving—at 5 p.m.—getting a jump on rivals like Target, which opened at 8 p.m.

Tammy Moore, an owner of hair salon/spas from Skaneateles, N.Y., showed up at the Toys "R" Us in New York City's Times Square. Last year, she did all buying online, she said, but her family was on a trip to the city and thought store shopping would be fun.



Are you hungry for Cyber Monday? As it turns out, America's favorite day to shop online can also be a great day to buy gourmet goodies. Charles Passy has details on the News Hub. Photo: Creminelli.

"I think I probably spend more online than I do in-store just because of the convenience of being home and sitting at the computer," the 44-year-old businesswoman said. "But now that we're down here, definitely in-store."

Store chains used rolling discounts to keep shoppers lingering and competitors' guessing. On Friday at 8 a.m. Wal-Mart started "Manager's Specials," which included unannounced promotions set by individual store managers who received a set budget to spur sales.

Best Buy had three waves of Black Friday deals on tap but kept its assortment of midnight door busters, including a \$500 Xbox One, under wraps for most of the evening.

Flagging bargains too early risks having competitors match or beat prices. Market Track LLC, which tracks pricing on the Web, said Best Buy had advertised a Samsung gas range for \$699 in its Black Friday flier. On Wednesday, Sears dropped its price for the oven to \$599. By Thursday, Best Buy and hhgregg Inc. had matched the lower price.

—Shelly Banjo, Greg Bensinger, Drew FitzGerald and Daniel Lippman contributed to this article.

Write to Paul Ziobro at Paul.Ziobro@wsj.com and Suzanne Kapner at Suzanne.Kapner@wsj.com

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Online holiday shopping stays strong while stores lag

Alistair Barr, USA TODAY 4:25 p.m. EST December 16, 2013

With Christmas nine days away, consumers have completed 44% of their shopping, a little behind where they should be at this point, The NPD Group finds.



(Photo: Joshua Lott, Getty Images)

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SAN FRANCISCO — Holiday shoppers are busy online, while physical stores have some work to do to salvage what has been a challenging season so far, retail experts said Monday.

While the crucial holiday season started strongly, especially for e-commerce companies Amazon.com and eBay, there was concern about a possible lull in the middle of the period between Thanksgiving and Christmas. However, that slowdown, which hit hard last year, has yet to materialize.

"So far we haven't seen much of a dip — not nearly as much as last year," said Scot Wingo, CEO of ChannelAdvisor, which helps merchants sell more online.

This holiday season is [six days shorter than last year](#), leaving consumers less time to complete gift purchases. Promotions continue to come thick and fast, which also may have helped prop up sales, he added.

Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, launched a new series of online sales this Monday, calling the event "Gold Monday."

Amazon unveiled an interest-free installment plan that lets shoppers buy one of its Kindle Fire HDX tablets over nine months. In the U.K., the company offered 10 pounds off select products if consumers spend 50 pounds by Dec. 24.

"I haven't seen them do something that aggressive in a while," Wingo said.

ChannelAdvisor clients are generating same-store sales growth of more than 30% on Amazon.com so far this holiday, compared to the same period last year. On eBay, that number has been in the mid-20% range. Wingo said those results were positive for both companies.

"Online is going to be the darling of the holiday shopping season," said Marshal



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HOLIDAY SHOPPING

EBay mobile shopping almost
doubles this holiday

Alistair Barr

Cohen, chief retail industry analyst at The NPD Group. "It may grow a little more than the 20% that was expected before the season began. The consumer is spending more time online trying to find deals."

In contrast, physical store retailers have had a tougher holiday season so far. With Christmas nine days away, consumers have completed 44% of their shopping, a little behind where they should be at this point, according to Cohen.

"Some say it's the weather and I say it's a lack of exciting merchandise," he added. "Stores have not done enough to generate excitement and consumers are waiting for sales and discounts to get better."

Brian Sozzi, CEO of Belus Capital Advisors, a research firm focused on the retail sector, visited five Wal-Mart stores in the New York City area recently and found excess seasonal inventory.

"They just bought too much," Sozzi said. A Wal-Mart spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment Monday.

Sozzi also spotted lots of clearance racks with items priced 40% to 70% off at J.C. Penney stores and aggressive promotions by Abercrombie & Fitch, Gap and Coach.

A large storm this weekend in the Northeast and Midwest prevented some shoppers from visiting stores on Saturday. But there is still another weekend to go before Christmas and purchases have probably been delayed rather than canceled, analysts said Monday.

Super Saturday is the Saturday before Christmas, when many shoppers try to get in their last minute shopping. This year, that day falls on Dec. 21.

"About 50% of shopping will be done in the last week of the holiday season," Cohen said. "Retailers will be able to make it up this weekend. But if the weather plays havoc again it could take a toll."

Belus Capital's Sozzi suggests shoppers buy gift cards and wait until the days following Christmas when retailers will likely have even bigger discounts. The analyst highlighted Best Buy in particular, which has been among the most aggressive with promotions to compete with Amazon.

For shoppers planning to buy gifts late in the season online, orders can be placed on Dec. 23 for fast delivery the following day, UPS said.

Amazon is offering one-day shipping on orders placed as late as Midnight EST on Dec. 23. For Dec. 24, the company offers Local Express Delivery in cities including Boston, Chicago and New York for \$3.99 per item.

eBay is keeping its same-day delivery service, eBay Now, open longer from Dec. 16 to 23 to capture sales from consumers doing last minute shopping.

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retail watch

Patagonia's Anti-Shopping Sentiment Intact for Off-Beat Black Friday Promo

Posted by [Mark J. Miller](#) on November 26, 2013 06:23 PM



While most retailers would like consumers to heat up their credit cards this weekend, outdoor gear and apparel retailer Patagonia is going seriously against the grain and asking consumers to put away their wallets. After all, how much stuff do we need?

In line with the company's [sustainable ethos](#), the company has released a short film, "Worn Wear," that celebrates the gear we all already have and the stories that our clothing can tell. The retailer's sales have gone up 40 percent since it ran the campaign's [first installment in 2011](#), featuring a full-page ad in the *New York Times* that showed a picture of a Patagonia coat with the words "Don't Buy This Coat."

[According to Bloomberg Businessweek](#), 15 Patagonia stores across the US will show the film this Friday in what will be a bit of confusing Black Friday marketing: Come on into our store and don't buy anything—except maybe a \$30 sewing kit to repair your worn-in Patagonia gear. *Ad Age* [points out](#) that Patagonia has been doing a version of this counterintuitive marketing since 2005 when the company started its "[Common Threads Initiative](#)," which "asked customers to take

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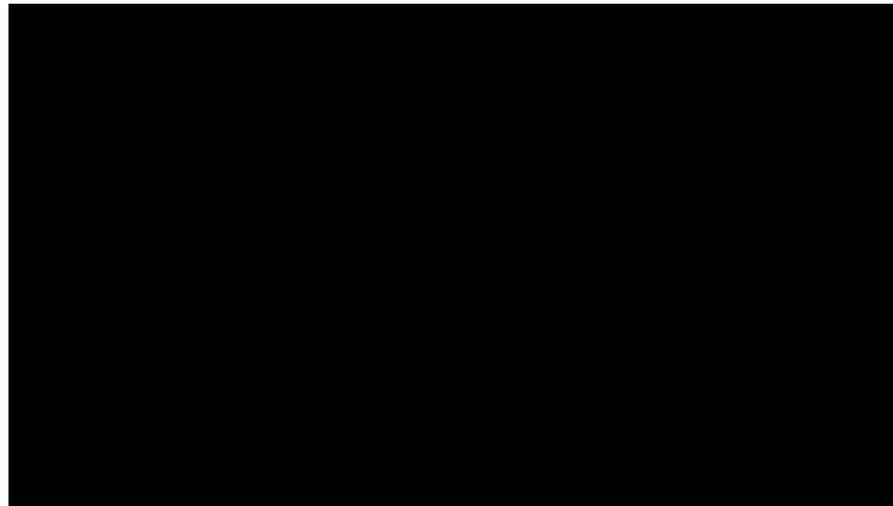
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a pledge to only buy what they need and reuse what they don't."

And if you're in the sharing mood, the retailer wants consumers to [share their clothing stories](#) on social media using the hashtag #WornWear.



More about: [Retail](#), [Patagonia](#), [Worn Wear](#), [Common Threads Initiative](#), [Sustainability](#), [Advertising](#), [Marketing](#), [Black Friday](#), [Holiday Shopping](#), [Holiday Ads](#)

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And then there were two. A few more deals and a few more days before #BlackFriday. <http://t.co/1hb...>

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Record sales for Cyber Monday

by AFP on december 4, 2013

Online retail sales for Cyber Monday grew 16 per cent from last year to \$US2.29 billion (\$A2.52 billion), lifted by more shopping on mobile devices, a market tracker says.

The Adobe Digital Index survey said online sales for the key holiday shopping day reflected an 80 per cent jump in sales from mobile devices like smartphones and tablets. Mobile accounted for some 18.3 per cent of online sales.

Cyber Monday stems from the early days of the internet, when consumers would use their fast internet connections at work to make online holiday purchases. But many retailers are extending their deals over several days from the Thanksgiving Day holiday on Thursday.



“Retailers earned 10 per cent of their holiday sales in just the last five days, an increase of 26 per cent year-over-year,” said Tamara Gaffney, principal analyst for Adobe Digital Index.

Adobe's online shopping data is based on an analysis of nearly 900 million visits to 2000 retailer websites on Cyber Monday and more than three billion visits since Thanksgiving Day.

A separate analysis by IBM showed Cyber Monday was the biggest online shopping day in history with a 20.6 per cent increase in online sales. IBM said 17 per cent of total online sales came from mobile, an increase of 55.4 per cent year-over-year.

“We continue to see a dramatic movement of the new digitally savvy consumer as Cyber Monday once again proved to be the star of this holiday shopping season,” said Jay Henderson of IBM.

“The mobile device has become the shopping companion of choice for consumers, driving record mobile sales.”

Forecasters project just three to four per cent growth in the entire retail sector this holiday season, while online shopping is expected to soar 13 to 14 per cent in the 2013 season.

AFP

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Report: REI Has Best Mobile Site Of Top 100 Retailers, Apple The Worst

Nov 14, 2013 at 9:59am ET by Greg Sterling

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In October [The Search Agency](#) evaluated Fortune's top 100 brands to determine whether and to what degree they reflected Google's mobile best practices recommendations. Most of the top brands, including Google itself, didn't score particularly well, according to the search-marketing firm's "Mobile Experience Scorecard."



The Search Agency is now back with a comparable look at the 100 top "multichannel retailers" in the US (read: brick and mortar stores that offer e-commerce). Using the same criteria as in the previous test (see below), the firm examined mobile site load time, site format, store locator and presence/whereabouts of a search box.

Categories, Point System, and Weightings

Score	Load Time Weighted 33.5%	Site Format Weighted 20%	Store Locator Weighted 20%	Search Box Weighted 9%	Social Media Weighted 6.5%	Apps Weighted 6%	Click-to- call Weighted 5%
5	Under 1 second	Responsive Web Design	Above Fold	Above Fold	At least 3 social media buttons (large)	Apple store app download prompted	Button or Number
4	1-2 seconds	Dedicated Mobile Site		Below Fold	At least 1 social media button (large)	Prominent button to download app	
3	2-3 seconds		Below Fold/In Drop Menu	Click to Access	At least 3 social media buttons (zoom to see)	Link to download app	
2	3-4 seconds		Zoom to see	Zoom to see	At least 1 social media button (zoom to see)	Link for tablet app	Zoom to see
1	4-5 seconds				Link to social media, without button		
0	Over 5 seconds	Desktop Version	None	None	None	No evidence of app on site	None

After the tests were performed The Search Agency generated a composite score for each retailer. Below are the top 20 mobile-optimized multichannel retailers as scored by the firm.

The top 20 were almost all over 4 points on a five-point scale. The average score for the top 100 overall was 3.17 (out of 5) but average scores varied by category. Pharma was the highest scoring retail category (3.95), just slightly better than kid-oriented retailers (3.88). Jewelry retailers performed worst with a category average of 1.89.

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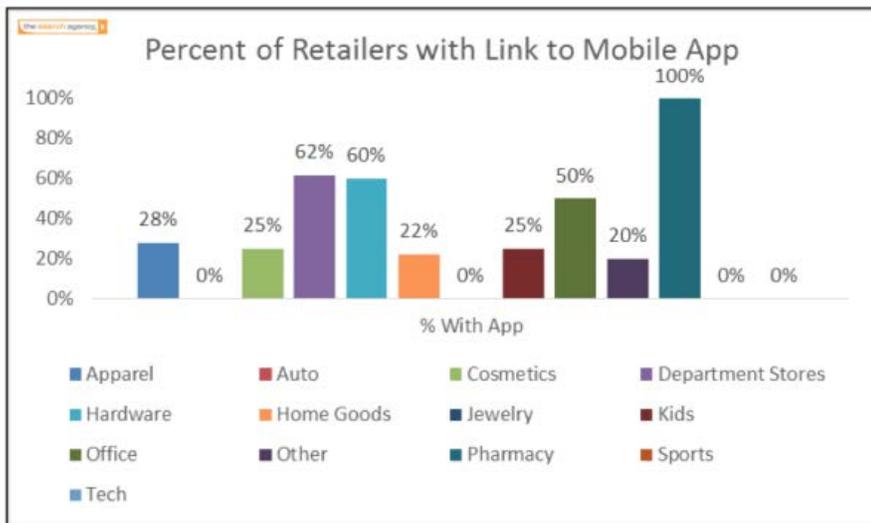
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Rank	Companies	Load Time	Format	Store locator	Search Box	Social Media	App	Click-to-Call	TOTAL SCORE
1	REI	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	4.740
2	Toys "R" Us	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	4.405
3	CVS	4	4	5	3	5	5	5	4.285
4	Menards	5	4	5	5	0	5	0	4.225
5	O'Reilly Automotive	5	4	5	5	4	0	0	4.185
6	West Elm	5	4	5	5	0	0	5	4.175
7	Gymboree	5	4	5	5	0	0	5	4.175
8	OfficeMax	5	4	5	5	0	0	5	4.175
9	The Children's Place	4	4	5	5	5	0	5	4.165
10	Ace Hardware	4	4	5	5	5	0	5	4.165
11	Eddie Bauer	4	4	5	5	5	0	5	4.165
12	Dollar Tree	4	4	5	5	5	0	5	4.165
13	Advance Auto Parts	4	4	5	5	5	0	5	4.165
14	JC Penney	5	4	5	5	0	4	0	4.165
15	Home Depot	4	4	5	5	0	5	5	4.140
16	Barnes & Noble	5	4	5	5	0	3	0	4.105
17	Foot Locker	4	4	5	5	4	0	5	4.100
18	Famous Footwear	4	4	3	5	5	4	5	4.005
19	Ulta	4	4	5	3	5	0	5	3.985
20	BJ's Wholesale Club	5	4	5	5	0	0	0	3.925

Noteworthy firms in the bottom half of the list include Gap (51), Best Buy (57), Nike (77), Urban Outfitters (87), Crate and Barrel (92) and Apple (100). The Search Agency did not evaluate mobile apps although it did record links to mobile app downloads. Macy's, for example, ranked 59th on the Mobile Scorecard list but has a very progressive mobile app that includes indoor mapping and navigation.

The chart below shows what percentage of retailers by category linked to downloads for their mobile apps. My guess is that there are many more apps out there than corresponding links. This is clearly a missed opportunity for many retailers.



Most consumers interact with retailers much more broadly through the mobile web than via apps. Apps are going to be downloaded and used by loyal customers. Prospects and casual customers are less likely to have apps. That's why retailers need to build better mobile web experiences, which should also be gateways to app downloads.

Interestingly 91 percent of retailers on the list had dedicated mobile sites and only 1 percent were using responsive design. The other 8 percent relied on their PC sites.

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- ▶ SMX Sydney - May 27-28, 2014
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- ▶ SMX Paris - June 16-17 2013
- ▶ SMX East - Sept. 30 - Oct. 2, 2014
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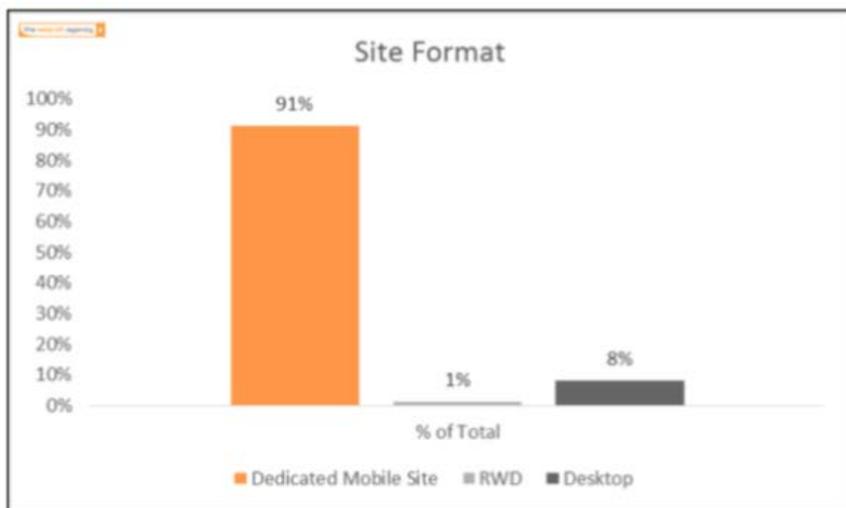
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Every day there's seemingly more data confirming how central smartphones are to shopping research and how influential their use will be in holiday 2013 sales. It's foolish, especially for retailers, not to do everything they can to create "awesome" mobile experiences for their customers. Otherwise they're not only leaving money on the table they're potentially hurting their brands.

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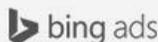
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About The Author: [Greg Sterling](#) is a Contributing Editor at Search Engine Land. He writes a personal blog [Screenwerk](#), about SoLoMo issues and connecting the dots between online and offline. He also posts at [Internet2Go](#), which is focused on the mobile Internet. Follow him [@gsterling](#). [See more articles by Greg Sterling](#)

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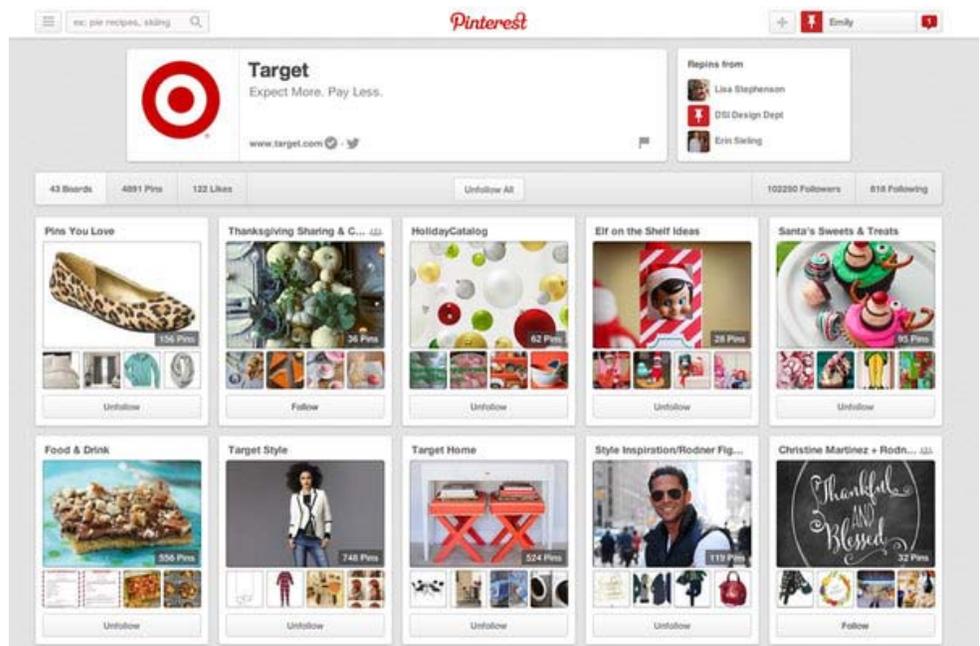
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Retailers Seek Partners in Social Networks



Steve Patrizi, head of partner marketing at Pinterest, said stores were going "where people are already looking for things."

By ELIZABETH A. HARRIS
Published: November 26, 2013

MINNEAPOLIS — "Showrooming" is no longer a bad word.

How Has Black Friday Changed for You?

When do you begin your holiday shopping, and where do you look for the best deals? Tell us how you shop for the season. The Times will feature a selection of the responses this week.

[Join the Discussion »](#)

Just a few years ago, the retail industry was deeply shaken by a growing trend in store browsing — shoppers wandering around the aisles with their cellphones, surveying the merchandise while looking online for somewhere else to buy it for less.

Some retailers explored blocking Internet service in stores. Others swapped out bar codes to make them incompatible with their competitors'. But ultimately, most major retailers decided that many customers would be on their phones regardless of what stores did — so they decided to get on

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THE MUSICAL EVENT OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON

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- MOST EMAILED RECOMMENDED FOR YOU
1. INDIA INK
Newsmagazine's Handling of Sex Harassment Complaint Draws Criticism
 2. As Holidays Approach, Retailers Fight for Sales
 3. Facebook, Still Dominant, Strives to Keep Cachet
 4. What's He Really Like? Check the Lulu App
 5. In Silicon Valley, Partying Like It's 1999 Once More
 6. BITS
Daily Report: Retailers Turn to Social



A partnership between Walmart and Google will lift the profile of local stores by displaying their inventory in search results.

their customers' screens.

With online retail competition increasing, nowhere is that frantic embrace more evident this year than in the parade of partnerships and projects traditional retailers have formed with digital companies, many of them for the holidays.

"We want to be where the consumer is," said Gregg W. Steinhafel, chief executive of Target, in an interview.

"I think it's like anything that hits you with a ton of bricks, it requires you to step back and say, 'O.K., it's very sobering, now what does this mean for us?'" he said. "We ultimately concluded that if that's the way the guest is going to live and shop, then we want to be a showroom. And we love showrooming — provided we can capture that sale."

For Target and many other retailers, among this season's favorites is Pinterest, which Casey Carl, president of multichannel at Target, described as "one of the social platforms where it's actually not only about sharing."

"It's not just about, 'Hey, look what I had for dinner!' It's about products," he said.

There are holiday-party-planning boards for Target Red Card holders. [Nordstrom](#), which already released its holiday catalog on Pinterest, says it will station signs in its 117 full-line stores that highlight some of its popularly pinned wares.

Pinterest itself is starting a new feature on Wednesday, a "Holiday Gift" category that will not only offer shoppers gift ideas but will give retailers yet another display window — this one online — for their items.

"Pinterest is a service about connecting with things, things you have, things you like, things you want," said Steve Patrizi, head of partner marketing for the nearly four-year-old company. "So for retailers, it's a no-brainer. Go where people are already looking for things."

But as the title "multichannel" or "omni-channel" coordinator might suggest, most major retailers are not linking themselves to just one social media site.

[Walmart](#) is leveraging [Facebook](#) and [Google](#). Toys "R" Us is pushing hard on YouTube. Sears is on Instagram and hosting holiday parties on Twitter.

According to comScore, a company that collects and analyzes online data, Pinterest has plenty of competition. Compared to its more than 43 million unique visitors in October, Twitter had 64 million, and Facebook towered over its neighbors with more than 178 million unique visitors.

And while shoppers referred from Pinterest to retailers spent more, according to IBM Digital Analytics Benchmark, those referred from Facebook were buying more frequently. During a four-week period in October and November, customers referred from Facebook spent an average of \$54.64 per order, compared to an average of \$123.50 per order from Pinterest, IBM found. Referrals from Facebook converted to sales at nearly four times the rate of Pinterest referrals.

"Last year we would've used three or four social platforms," said Jeffrey J. Jones II, chief marketing officer at Target. "This year we'll use seven or eight."

Daily Report

Media to Showcase Products



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Nicolas Franchet, head of retail and e-commerce for Facebook, said that while the company did not disclose what portion of their advertisements came from retailers, it was an important area for Facebook, which worked with retailers big and small.

“If you find somebody” we aren’t working with, Mr. Franchet said, “let me know.”

Walmart, for example, will use Facebook to announce its local store manager’s special on [Black Friday](#). Those deals will vary by location, and will be posted on each store’s individual Facebook page, like Walmart South Boston, Va.

Walmart is also partnering with Google, and that too will have a local bent, incorporating inventory at nearby stores into Google search results. If you search for “Weber grill,” Stephen F. Quinn, chief marketing officer at Walmart explained, Google will tell you if your local Walmart has Weber grills in stock, and it will tell you that store’s location. Walmart started experimenting with this process earlier this year and has increased its efforts for the holidays.

“We have our own mobile app, but we’re also pursuing mobile with Google, we’re pursuing mobile with Facebook,” Mr. Quinn said. “For the local component, they’re really critical for us to be able to execute.”

Pinterest does not track how many retailers use the site — it is an open platform where users can set up boards however they like — but in addition to its focus on “things,” its appeal to those companies at the moment also extends to its price. It is free. The company has just started experimenting with promoted pins that might eventually be sold as ads, but Pinterest is not hurting for money. Last month, the company raised \$225 million, which it will use to expand and build up a product advertisers will want to buy. Pinterest said its usage outside North America had grown 125 percent since January and its usage on mobile devices had grown 50 percent, becoming more than 75 percent of all usage.

As for its appeal, the site also has a heavily female user base, an important demographic for retailers. But with women making up 75 percent of the site’s visitors and 93 percent of total time spent on the site, according to comScore, it would make sense for retailers to broaden their partnerships beyond even one as fast-growing as Pinterest.

A recent survey conducted by Deloitte found that a huge amount of holiday shopping activities would be done on smartphones this year, if not the actual buying itself. The survey found that about two-thirds of smartphone owners planned to use their phones during holiday shopping, but primarily to find store locations, compare prices and look for product information.

Gartner, an information technology research company, does not envision a major shift caused by mobile purchases in the near future. It projects physical store purchases in the United States will still cover about 85 percent of all purchases in 2015.

“We see mobile more as an informational channel than a transactional channel,” said John Davison, an analyst at Gartner. “That will change over time, but it will take some time.”

For all the excitement and holiday glitter retailers are throwing into digital partnerships, Mr. Davison emphasized that these partnerships were still young. Like all experiments, he said, many of them will not last.

“Digital is held to a very high standard in terms of measurability,” said Julie Krueger, industry director of retail at Google. “If it doesn’t produce results, they’ll figure out another place to spend their money.”

A version of this article appears in print on November 27, 2013, on page B1 of the New York edition with the headline: The Social Showroom.

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MOVIES »



You Can Check Out Any Time You Like, but ...

Fashionista

CAMPAIGNS

Retail's 7 Most Innovative Holiday Campaigns

by RACHEL ARTHUR



Photo courtesy of eBay.

The holiday season can account for up to 40% of a retailer's annual revenue, and thus it's no surprise to see some of our favorite stores (and fashion brands) go all-out with festive campaigns in a bid to capture as many dollars as possible.

Multiple initiatives have lined up to grab our attention this year, but if there's one thing tying them together, it's interactivity. From singing contests you can enter to touchscreens you can explore,

participation is the biggest push for 2013.

Pinterest is also proving big news. According to a [recent study](#) by Lab42, 94% of users say the virtual scrapbooking site has changed how they prepare for the holidays, while 42% have created their own holiday-themed boards. Meanwhile, stats show such activity is also affecting sales. Revenue on retail sites that originated from Pinterest doubled over Thanksgiving weekend, and brands like Target and Topshop have quickly taken advantage.

Here's our pick of the top seven activations.

1. eBay's Touchscreen Storefronts



First up is the [digital storefronts](#) eBay set up for Rebecca Minkoff, Toms and Sony in the Westfield San Francisco Centre shopping mall this season. Shopping from them is easy. As with any smartphone or tablet device, you just touch the screen and start browsing products, then complete the order via PayPal on your mobile device. Items can either be delivered to your home for free or picked up at the Sony Gallery on the floor below.

2. Gap's VSCO-Powered Gift Guide



GAP X VSCO

Gap has partnered with seven talented VSCO photographers to showcase inspiration for the season from our A to Z gift guide. Follow #VSCOxGap and #GiveAtoZ to discover more.

Gap.com/gift-guide



Gap x VSCO portraits

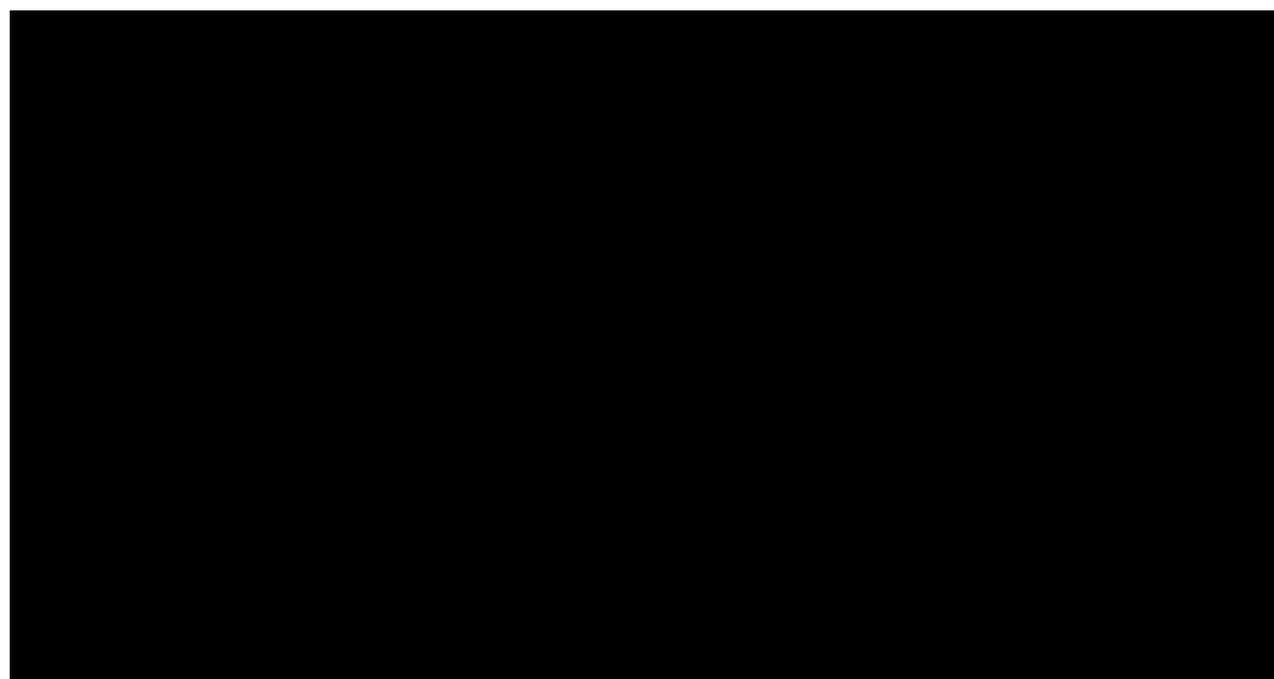


Rog Walker



Gap gave an indie twist to its holiday gift guide by [partnering with seven well-known users of photo-editing app VSCO](#) for its Make Love campaign. Those artists acted as both models and photographers, captured in various Gap products themselves and completing their own photo assignments based on one of Gap's holiday themes: fair isle, indigo, metallic, plaid, stripes, texture and warmth. The results are featured on both a [dedicated page](#) on VSCO's website as well as in Gap.com's "Give A-Z" [holiday guide](#).

3. John Lewis' "The Bear and The Hare"



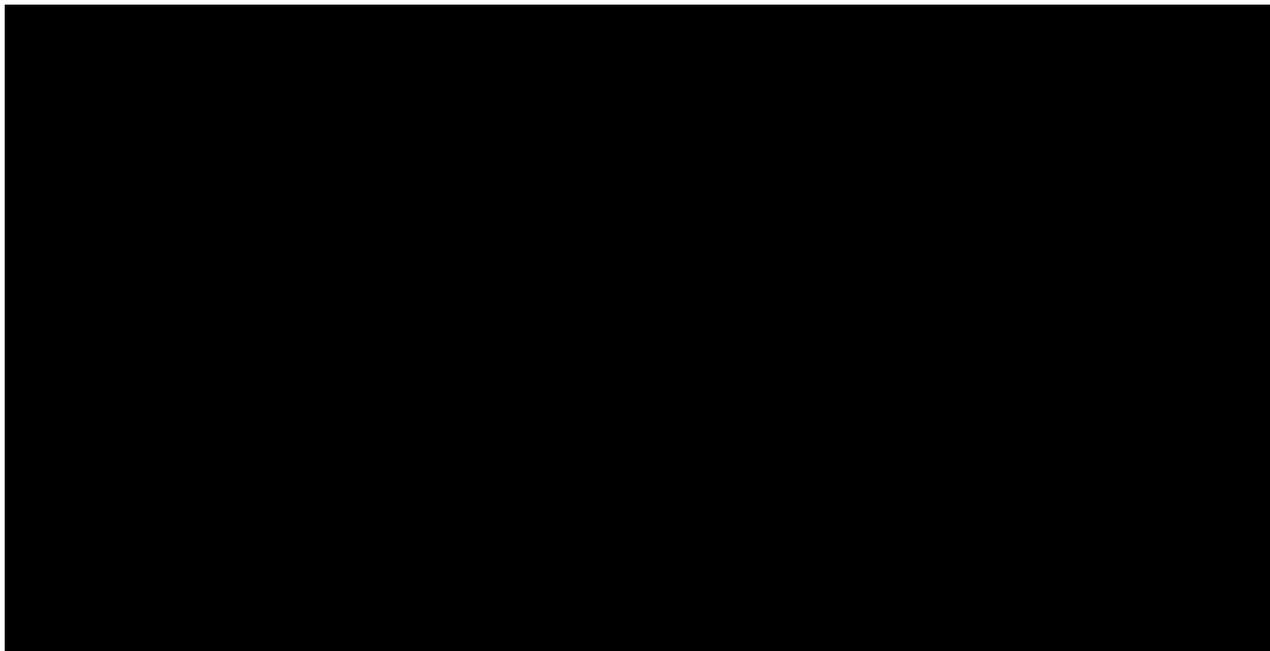
Over in the UK meanwhile, John Lewis wins for the biggest budget when it comes to advertising this year. It spent £7 million (\$11.4 million) on a hand-animated and very cute tale called “The Bear and The Hare,” which has garnered more than 10 million views on YouTube to date. What’s innovative is all the components that go with it, and none more so than the windows of its flagship store in London. They feature some of the 188 animal sculptures made from 7,000 everyday products tied to the bear and hare theme, like a reindeer made of Dyson vacuums, a polar bear of Nintendo Wiis and a turkey crafted from a series of rolled up towels. The retailer is also running a contest with the campaign, calling all aspiring singers to record and upload their own versions of Keane’s “Somewhere Only We Know” for a chance to have their recording play with the commercial on Christmas day.

4. JC Penney’s “Jingle Mingle” Singing Contest



JC Penney also called for singing content from its fans this year. Up until Dec. 3 it invited aspiring vocalists to upload videos of themselves singing “Silent Night” to its Jingle Mingle website. Hundreds of the best are then going to be played on the facade of the retailer’s Manhattan Mall store. For each one submitted, JC Penney donated \$20 to the United Service Organizations (USO).

5. Topshop’s “Dear Pinterest” Campaign



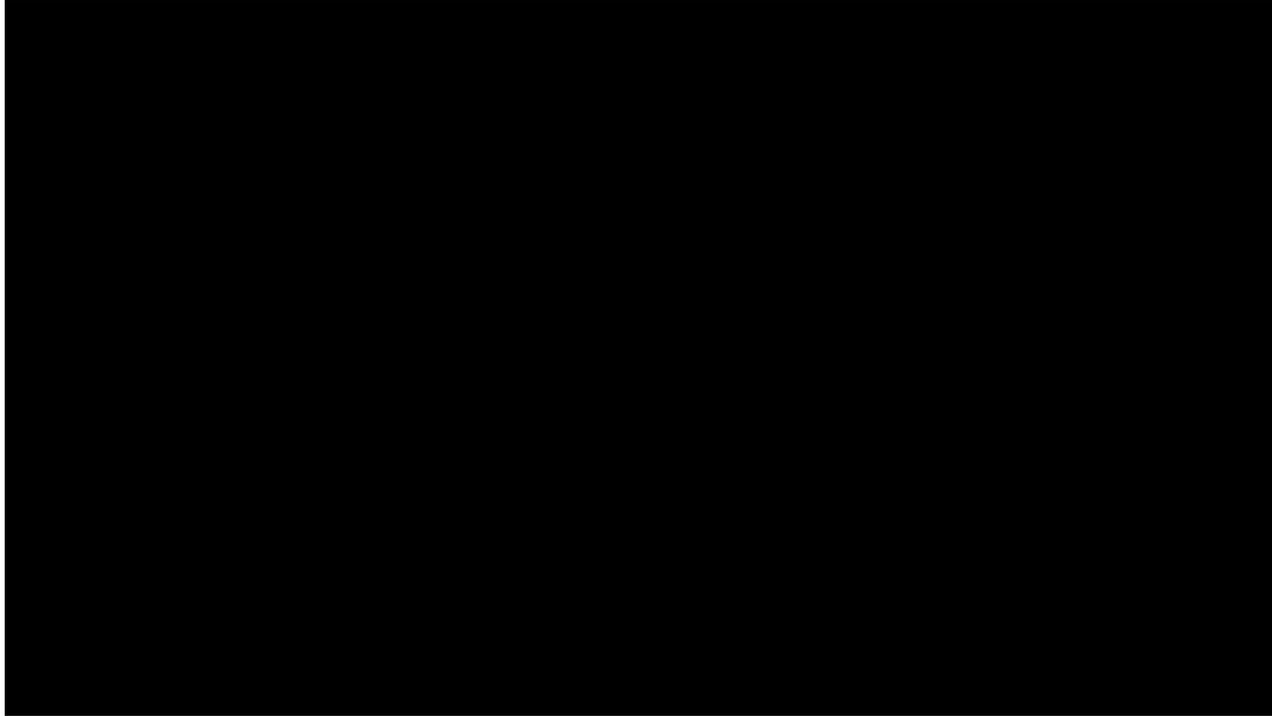
It was all about Pinterest for Topshop this season. The UK-based retailer used Pinterest to power its [online gift guide](#), and even attached oversized tags to in-store merchandise identifying the ones that had been pinned the most. In November, there was also a giant touchscreen in Topshop's New York and London flagships that allowed shoppers to pin, share and shop from a gift list there and then.

6. Target's Pinteresting "Awesome Shop"



Pinterest also makes an appearance at Target this season. Target has launched [an e-commerce storefront](#) powered by Pinterest as well as its own reviews this year. Target Awesome Shop, as it's called, incorporates over 1,000 products that have received four stars or higher in the customer reviews on Target.com and are one of the retailer's most-pinned products on Pinterest. The result: a highly curated, not to mention awesome, list of recommended items. You can search by category and then click on each product for more information (such as those reviews), before being redirected to the main Target.com site to add them to your shopping cart.

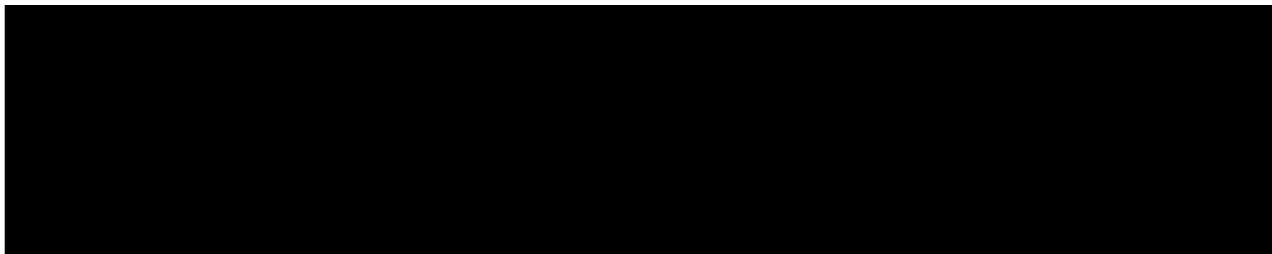
7. Louis Vuitton's "The Goose Game"

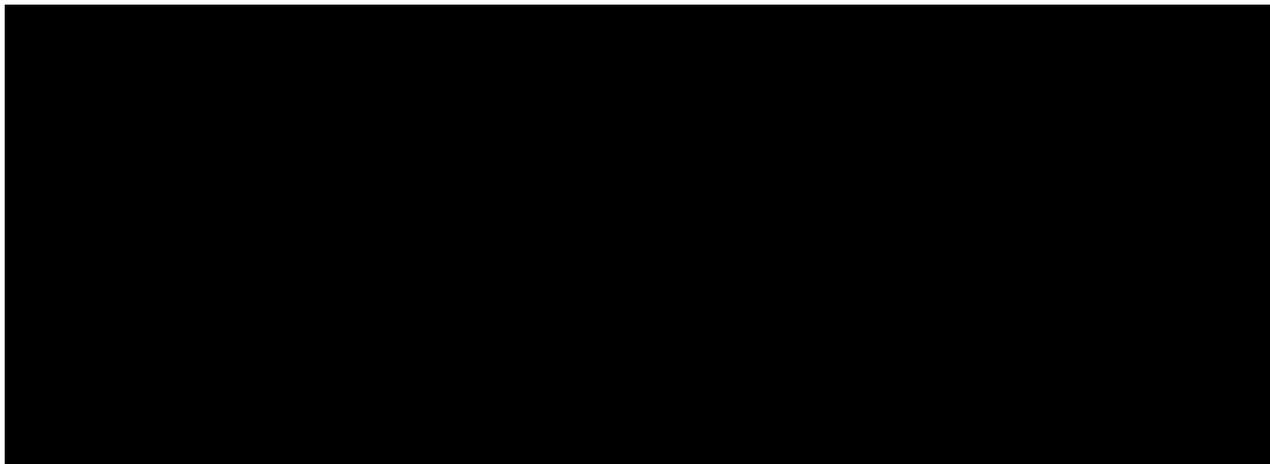


Louis Vuitton created an [online board game](#) to feature its holiday gifts. The game, which functions much like "Snakes and Ladders," is made up of squares featuring Louis Vuitton products that players can purchase in just a few clicks.

Honorable Mention: Kmart's "Show Your Joe"

It may not be a stunning piece of innovation, but [Kmart's "Show Your Joe" commercial](#) sure brought the laughs — and the views. The video, which was made for TV, has racked up more than 16 million views on YouTube alone since its Nov. 15 release.





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Published on Monday, December 16th, 2013 at 9:00 AM

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Bergdorf Goodmans Window 2013



Bergdorf Goodmans Window 2013-2



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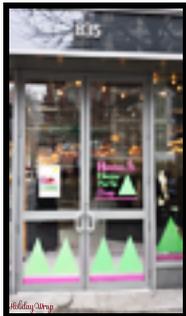
The-setting-is-Chicago-with-its-traditions-



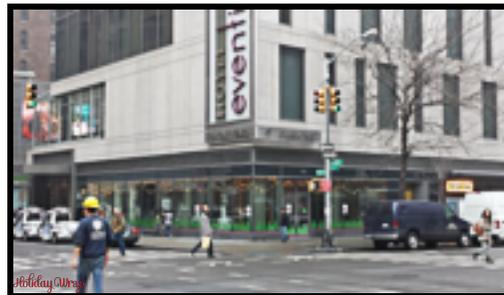
In-Miracle-on-31st-Street-the-1947-hit-



Hester Street Fair Pop Up Holiday 1



Hester Street Fair Pop Up Holiday 2



Hester Street Fair Pop Up Holiday 3



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Holiday Wrap 2013_H&M_0337



Holiday Wrap 2013_H&M_NYC_0338



Holiday Wrap 2013_H&M_NYC_0339



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Holiday Wrap 2013_Urban



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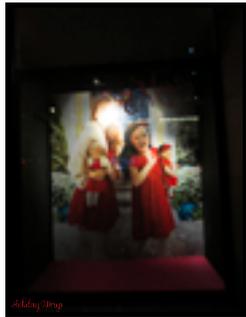
Holiday Wrap



Holiday Wrap



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Holiday Wrap 2013_American Girl



Holiday Wrap 2013_Saks_NYC_0358



Holiday Wrap 2013_Saks_NYC_0359



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NYC Union Square Subway Stop 1



NYC Union Square Subway Stop 2



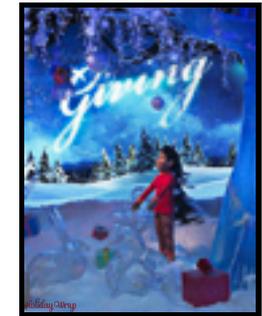
Holiday Wrap



Holiday Wrap



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Macy's Shopfront NYC 2013



Walnut-Room-Christmas-Tree



Anthropologie 2013



Victoria's Secret 2013



Jack Daniels

