

Synovate Reports Early Christmas Cheer On The High Street

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Latest data released by Synovate Retail Performance show that retail footfall in the UK is rallying.

For the month of November, the number of shoppers entering non-food stores fell by just -1.7% in the month against November 2010, according to Synovate's Retail Traffic Index (RTI), the industry's barometer of shopper numbers.

This marks an improvement on October, when the year-on-year comparison stood at -2.8%, itself a significant improvement on the months before.

Better news still is that shoppers have hit the high street in force during the first week of December. For w/c 27th November, Synovate's RTI recorded a 9.3% increase on the same week of 2010, when heavy snowfall crippled the country, but, perhaps more importantly an 11.1% rise on the week before.

"With so much bad news associated with the state of the British economy at the moment, it is heartening to report some good news from the high street," comments Dr Tim Denison, Director of Retail Intelligence at Synovate. "Over the past couple of months we have seen the gap narrowing between the number of people out shopping compared to the same months in 2010. What will be even more encouraging to retailers and others is that we are forecasting a year-on-year growth of +1.3% in December. If realised, this will be the first time since October 2009 that the RTI change has been positive."

"Of course in itself, footfall does not equate to sales, but what it does equate to is buying opportunities. Footfall is the key driver of retail sales and retailers will be thankful to see these latest figures from Synovate", argues Denison.

"What we are seeing in our data and I'm hearing from around the country, is that shoppers are giving more thought and expending more care and effort in deciding what to buy their relatives and friends for Christmas this year. Times are unquestionably tough, but Christmas spirit is not being stifled it seems. People are visiting more shops, highly aware of the continuous waves of promotions and conscious too that every visit results in new promotions and bargain opportunities," reflects Denison.

"For the retailers' part, great credit should be given not just to the energy and pace of the changing promotional campaigns, but to the look and feel of their stores this Christmastide. All over the country, the standard of window displays and in-store merchandising is the best I can remember for years, and justice will be done if the extra effort made is suitably rewarded this year." Denison concludes that "December has started strongly and there is every opportunity that Christmas 2011 will be better than many expect, despite the battery of gloomy statistics being reported."

Synovate is scheduled to release its next set of RTI figures on Wednesday 14th December.

About Synovate Retail Performance

Synovate Retail Performance provides footfall monitoring solutions, shopper tracking systems and in-store behavioural research to retailers worldwide. Its core products - Shopper Count, Shopper Interact and Shopper Engage - scientifically measure all aspects of a shopper experience from store entry to exit. It supplies national and international retailers with essential business metrics to drive accountability and performance improvement.

Synovate Retail Performance is home to the Retail Traffic Index series, which for over 10 years has been the industry's leading tracker of national, regional and sector retail footfall trends. It is also co-founder of the KPMG / Synovate Retail Think Tank, offering thought leadership on the state of retail health and the future of retailing.

General information for Synovate Retail Performance, email info.rp@synovate.com

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