

Shoppers Flock To Web, Mobile Devices To Hunt Down Holiday Bargains

Contributed by Ipsos
Wednesday, 21 December 2011
Last Updated Wednesday, 21 December 2011

Shoppers Want Deals and Are Using Technology and Media to Find the Best Bargain

With only a few days of shopping left before Santa descends from the North Pole, a recent study from Ipsos MediaCT conducted with Google has analyzed some of the shopping habits and trends from the 2011 holiday shopping season.

Several key trends emerge from the study, including the growing popularity of Black Friday deals and the importance of the Internet and mobile technology on the purchase decision process.

Traditionally, the Thanksgiving weekend marks the unofficial start of the Christmas period, and for retailers, the weekend is one of the biggest days on the calendar. For many holiday shoppers, Black Friday is the big kick-off for the holidays shopping season and one that bargain-hunting consumers have come to love.

“Earlier in the year, we predicted a rise in Black Friday shopping this year and that has proven to be true,” says Jared Mack, Director with Ipsos’s media research team. “Shoppers took to Black Friday deals like never before, with Google reporting giant leaps in searches for Black Friday deals and retailers opening their doors to greater numbers of enthused bargain hunters.”

But no doubt, technology has become central to holiday bargain hunting. A key finding in the Ipsos study is the rising importance of mobile technology in helping shoppers locate bargains and make purchases. Among smartphone users, nearly 20% of their online purchases are expected to be made on their device this holiday season and about half of smartphone users plan to download or use an app to help with their holiday shopping. Considering it makes up a notable share of the shopping done online, retailers skip mobile at their own risk.

“Online research conducted during the holiday shopping season is prolific and the Internet is the top source for holiday shopping information, beating other traditional and print media sources such as catalogs, newspapers, friends and family,” says Tina Chiu, Senior Research Manager with Ipsos. “Online research also largely influences people’s buying decisions on the brands, retailers, and types of gifts they choose.”

Armed with technology and mobile devices in hand, today’s American consumer is savvy with the tools of the trade, but they are also savvy deal hunters.

“Consumers are on the hunt for deals. They are more vigilant about product research and searching online before heading out to the store,” adds Mack. “Many shoppers this year will wait until after Christmas for post-Christmas deals. Our research predicts that more shoppers will be taking advantage of after Christmas deals compared to prior years and it will be interesting to see after the retailers report their sales data if this predicted trend does hold.”

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New York, NY and Los Angeles, CA “ 20 December 2011