

Black Friday – a new UK retail tradition?

ADVERTISING CONSUMER EDINBURGH

DAVID MCLEAN - HEAD OF DIGITAL STRATEGY 06 DEC 2018

Black Friday started in the US as the day after Thanksgiving when US shoppers would kick off their Christmas shopping pushing retailers 'from the red, into the black'.

Ever since Black Friday was imported to the UK from the states in 2010 by Amazon (to a lesser extent) and in 2013 by ASDA (owned by US retailing giant Walmart) it has exploded exponentially.

Looking at 2018, early figures show online sales up 30.8% vs. last year^[1], but of course, that's just online with bricks and mortar stores seeing the largest footfall drop in 3 years. So, with this shift, how are retailers reacting?

Rather than just Black Friday, we've seen the emergence of Cyber Monday and now many retailers have turned this into a 10-day event, but is that to the detriment of overall sales? Black Friday has already delayed retail sales across the year as consumers wait for the big sales event.[\[2\]](#) So by stretching this out are retailers trying to take back the Christmas sales periods we once knew?

Let's also look at Alibaba who in China on Singles' Day (the Chinese anti-valentine's day which occurs on November 11th due to the symbology around 11.11). They sold a mind boggling \$30.8bn[\[3\]](#) across the course of Singles' Day and put a lot of effort into ensuring there are real bargains to be found. To put this in context, 3x more than Black Friday and Cyber Monday across all online retailers, combined! Maybe there's something in that.

But does Black Friday really give us pre-Christmas bargains? Not according to research group Which? as cited in The Guardian, it "tracked the prices of 94 popular products, including TVs, cameras and fitness trackers, on offer over Black Friday 2017 from six months before until six months afterwards. It found 87% of the items were cheaper at other times of year and nearly half were cheaper in the six months after Black Friday."[\[4\]](#)

And let's not even talk of GDPR and the influx of emails, I've heard anecdotal tales of "I thought I wouldn't continue to get all these emails" however, research from Nesta said around 22pc of the people they surveyed said the number of spam emails they had received had increased in the six months since the rules came into force.[\[5\]](#)

So, with all this mayhem is Black Friday the new 'Bank Holiday Sofa Sale'? Either way as a straw-poll around desks 5 out of 6 of us purchased something on Black Friday and with sites like PriceSpy tracking retail prices we can add to the mayhem and take advantage of the most wonderful time of the year!

Sources:

[\[1\]](https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2018/11/black-friday-failed-spur-high-street-life/) <https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2018/11/black-friday-failed-spur-high-street-life/>

[2] <https://www.ft.com/content/065b0f0c-92a0-11e5-bd82-c1fb87bef7af>

[3] <http://uk.businessinsider.com/alibaba-stock-price-singles-day-historical-ecommerce-china-eco-cools-down-2018-11>

[4] <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/nov/20/black-friday-cheaper-which-best-bargains>

[5] <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2018/11/24/eu-data-rules-have-not-stopped-spam-emails-nesta-survey-finds/>

ADVERTISING CONSUMER EDINBURGH