



Black Friday and Beyond: Customer Experience Marks the Shop

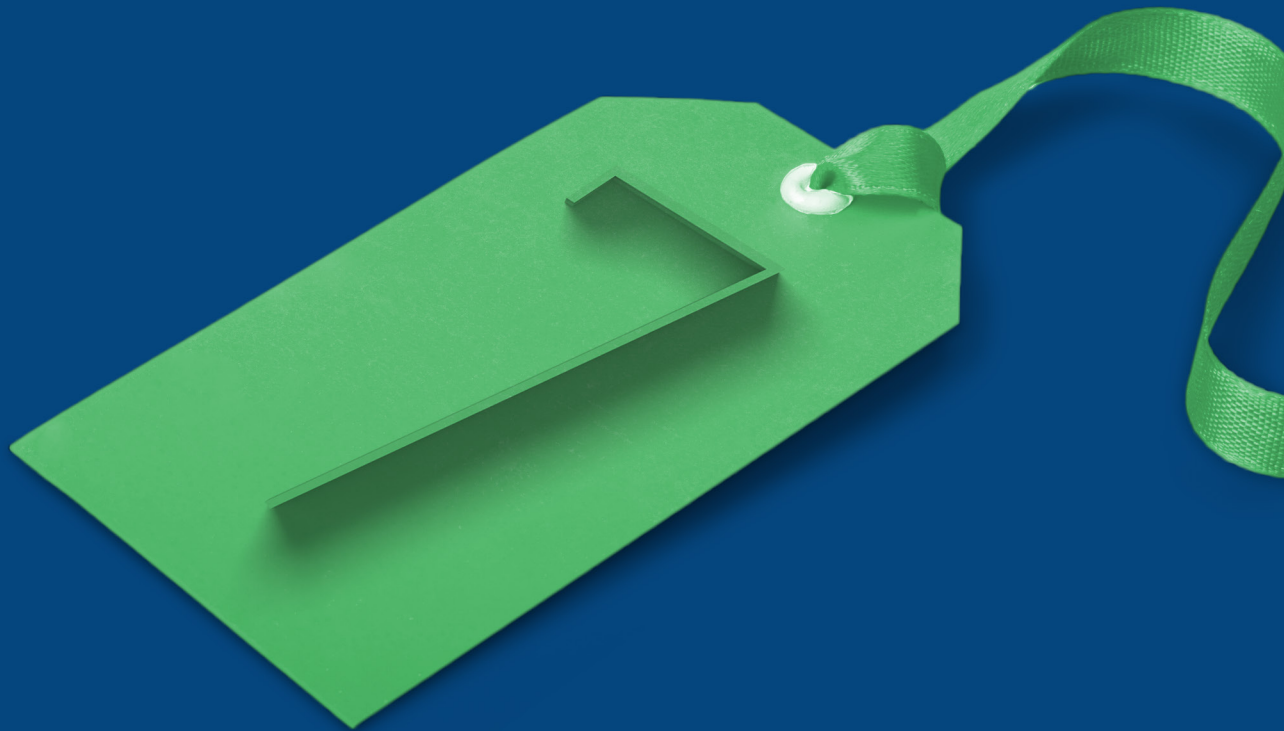


7 ways your customer experience program can make
or break your holiday shopping season.

Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, and Cyber Monday...

it's the weekend that delivers billions in revenue and can more than double your foot traffic. Marketing budgets soar into the hundreds of millions to compete for consumer attention. Gone are the days of simple signage, and the latest products neatly arranged on shelves. The very definition of the in-store and online retail experience is going through the largest shift in its history.

As innovative retail experiences like Restoration Hardware's Gallery, and COTY's new new fūme scent lounge at Yorkdale continue to emerge, now more than ever, it's imperative to have not only a solid, but an exceptional plan around customer experience (CX). The web has made the world smaller, and brands finding they can no longer compete solely on price, and rarely on exclusivity of product are discovering that a focus on CX is the next frontier.



Our latest survey results uncovered 7 CX breakthroughs to help you keep everything running smoothly during the Black Friday weekend and throughout the entire holiday season. Prevent your customers from leaving your store or digital platform deflated.

1

In-store and online worlds collide

What we found

As the line between the physical and the digital continue to blur in our everyday lives, so it is with today's consumer experience. Consumers are about equally split on where they prefer to shop for gifts - 48% prefer the in-store experience, while 51% prefer online.



48%

prefer to shop
in-store

51%

prefer to
shop online

What it means

Online is beginning to overtake brick-and-mortar as a preference for where customers ultimately conduct their transactions. But don't be alarmed, when the numbers are this close you'll find most consumers floating between both your physical and digital storefronts. Some may search for the best in-store deals near them, or see an item online and head in for the tactile experience in order to feel comfortable converting. Others may begin with an experience in-store and then make their purchase online when they are ready to commit, or have satiated their appetite for online comparison shopping.



CX Tip

In order to prevent losing customers in the critical gap between a visit to your retail location and/or website, create consistent and considered customer experiences across both environments, especially on key features like discounts and return policies.

2

To return or not to return, that is their question

What we found

While marketing is essential for creating awareness, it hardly moves a customer to ultimately convert. Our survey revealed that if cost wasn't a factor, free shipping (73%), product quality (58%), and previous experience shopping at a retailer (55%) are the top reasons why consumers would choose to shop at one retailer over another. Few say that ads (10%) or recommendations from a blog or social media influencer (11%) would drive them to pick one store over another.

Top influences on choice of retailer



What it means

Tons of brands will offer free shipping, and the same or similar products at approximately the same price. This leaves us with our third leading factor as the key differentiator—their previous shopping experience. If you haven't delivered a customer experience worth remembering, Black Friday is your opportunity to do so. A successful plan for customer experience on one of the busiest shopping days of the year can cause them to return to your site or store time and again throughout the year. On the other hand, delivering a poor experience may prove to be detrimental, even causing your customers to bounce to a competitor permanently.



CX Tip

Free shipping is a big deal! It can keep customers from going to another site to make their purchase.



CX Tip

While Social media may not be a trigger for conversion, it's great for generating awareness of your brand before, during, and well after Black Friday is over.

Customers will document their shopping excursions with or without you. With a little guidance you can tie social media into a memorable, and shareable customer experience.



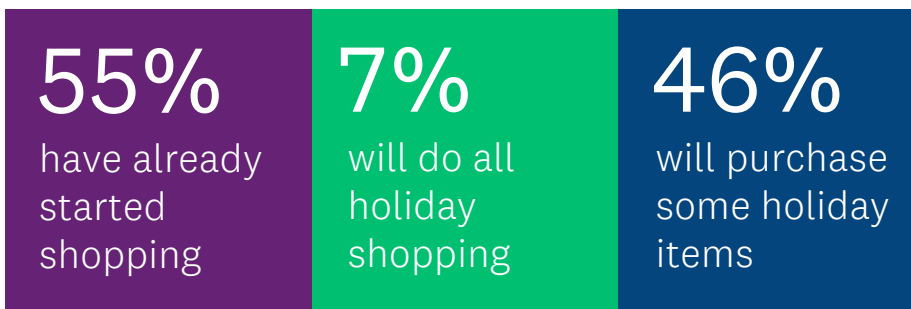
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It's not just about black Friday - have a holistic holiday program

What we found

While Black Friday kicks off one of the most anticipated shopping weekends of the year, over half of holiday shoppers (55%) will start their holiday shopping before the largest retail weekend of the year. Few plan on spending the bulk of their holiday dollars during that weekend - only 7% of Black Friday shoppers say they will do all of their shopping during that weekend, while 46% say it will only encompass a little of their entire holiday shopping spree.

Black Friday shopping breakdown



What it means

The billions in revenue associated with the Black Friday weekend are primarily the result of a cumulative effect, and not necessarily tied to overall brand performance. A lot of your foot traffic consists of customers who will buy little, if anything over that weekend.



CX Tip

Black Friday is your opportunity to create a customer experience that will yield long-term returns on all of those marketing dollars. Having a thoughtful plan around customer experience can turn new customers into loyal customers—loyal customers into advocates—and at the very least prevent an unhappy customer from deserting your brand.



4

Customer experience - your black Friday superpower

What we found

Canadian consumers who have a good experience shopping at a retailer are more likely to shop more at and recommend the retailer (68%). The positive impact of a great customer experience is greater than the negative impact of a poor customer experience. Fewer would stop shopping at a store (60%) or recommend to friends that they do not shop at a retailer (49%) if they had a bad experience.

68%

would recommend
a retailer after a
good experience

49%

would tell friends
to avoid a retailer
where they had a
bad experience



What it means

The positive impact of a great customer experience is greater than the impact of a negative or poor customer experience. A fantastic program can go a long way toward making your brand not only stand out, but almost make it invincible, even in the face of its own blunders.

The effect of a positive customer experience will be amplified with your US consumers who report being even more likely to continue shopping with a retailer (70%). They are also less likely to deter their friends from shopping at a retailer where they've had a negative experience (41%).



CX Tip

Arming your staff with the training and tools they need to satisfactorily handle complaints is an important part of a well-rounded customer experience program. Nearly half (45%) of consumers say that if they had a bad experience, they'd complain to the store manager or contact customer service.

CX Tip

Keep in mind, that social media is also a way to engage with your customers in real-time. While in-store they may head to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Snapchat for support before or instead of approaching a sales associate. Make sure to round out the customer experience with quality customer support staff on your social channels.



5

The deal with digital

What we found

Nearly half (46%) of holiday shoppers are likely to browse or purchase products on their smartphone, while only two in ten (20%) are likely to browse or purchase products on social media. 63% of Black Friday shoppers say they will find deals or price information directly on a retailer's website, while only 29% say they will look on social media or blogs for that information.

Black Friday media habits



46%



63%

What it means

Google has dubbed the consumer mobile device as the “door-to-the-store”. Making sure you can deliver a phenomenal and glitch-free customer experience on mobile is paramount, and your website will play a close second on your path to success. It’s ideal to have a strong supporting social media strategy, but only when it points to a great digital shopping experience. Social media won’t help and can only hurt if your customers are ultimately burned by bad experiences on their devices.



CX Tip

To make sure you’re delivering the optimal digital experience enable your team to manage the nuances between mobile-dedicated, mobile-optimized, responsive, adaptive, and desktop. Also be sure to plan ahead for your server’s capacity to handle traffic and transactions.

6

Mind your business

What we found

Over a third of Canadian holiday shoppers (37%) have either purchased or plan to purchase items for their company or organization during the holiday season, a whopping 10 percentage points higher than holiday shoppers in the US.

37%

have or plan to purchase items for their company or organization



10%

more of Canadian shoppers plan to purchase items for their company or organization than their US neighbors

What it means

B2C no longer has the exclusive on holiday shoppers, especially in Canada! If you have a product or service to sell to businesses or professionals, Black Friday may be a great time to sizzle and serve up your offerings. It may also be an ideal time to launch or take your customer experience program to the next level, especially if it's tailored for them.



CX Tip

Consider how the needs and requests of a business or professional might differ when developing your customer experience program. If you support or sell to multiple types of businesses or professionals, personalization and customization can take their experience to the next level and bring you repeat business and referrals.

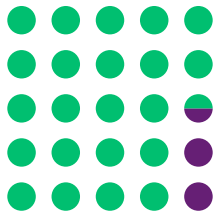


7

It's all about the base

What we found

The vast majority (91%) of those who plan to shop during Black Friday weekend are planning on shopping at places where they've purchased from before. For the same product, if price were equal, Black Friday shoppers also name free shipping (68%) as the top driver for selecting a retailer.



91%

plan to shop
at retailers they
have purchased
from in the past



68%

say free shipping
is a top driver for
selecting a retailer

What it means

Black Friday is not a growth strategy, but when you have a strong plan and program for customer experience it could be.



CX Tip

Develop and maintain a strong customer experience program throughout the year. Take really good care of loyal customers.



CX Tip

Don't leave your customer experience to chance. Measure what's working, and what isn't throughout the year by tracking your Net Promoter Score (NPS) with SurveyMonkey CX. Close the loop by responding directly to customers with a low NPS and discover your brand advocates with a high NPS.



Oh yeah, remember, **free shipping is a really big deal!**



Methodology: This SurveyMonkey survey was conducted online in the U.S. from October 20-23, 2017 among a national sample of 2,139 adults ages 18 and up, and on November 2, 2017 in Canada among a national sample of 1,011 adults. U.S. respondents for this survey were selected from the nearly 3 million people who take surveys on the SurveyMonkey platform each day, and data have been weighted for age, race, sex, education, and geography using the Census Bureau's American Community Survey to reflect the demographic composition of the United States. In Canada the sample was balanced to reflect the demographic composition of Canada in terms of age and gender.