Marketing Professor Analyzes Latest Black Friday Trends

Winthrop University

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Jane Thomas, Marketing Professor at Winthrop University, analyzed the latest Black Friday trends. "What we have seen happen over the past 12 years is that retailers have expanded the boundaries of Black Friday shopping," Thomas said. "There are Thanksgiving Day, Small Business Saturday and Green Tuesday sales. And people can shop online anytime."

With today's technology, consumers can set their smartphones for comparison apps to alert them when the price has dropped on a desired sales item. "Technology has really changed the game," said Thomas, who conducts her Black Friday research with Winthrop colleague Cara Peters, also of the College of Business Administration.

Consumers have learned that prices will only get better in the days leading up to Christmas, Thomas said.

Retailers know that Black Friday is not a make or break day now. There was even some backlash for businesses who did not want to require their employers to work in the hours leading up to Thanksgiving.

Black Friday also has changed in meaning to not just mean holiday sales but any sales. "When you see items on sale that are not normally Christmas gifts, such as rugs or appliances, then Black Friday does not carry the power it once did," Thomas said.

There also is shopper fatigue as some companies offer their best sales in the summer, such as Amazon or Best Buy. "We find that consumers get bored with the game and are looking for a different reason to shop," Thomas said.

She has found that New York department stores are experimenting with drawing shoppers back into their stores by offering more pleasurable experiences, such as book stores, coffee shops and other amenities along with strong customer service.

More on Thomas' thoughts on the six types of Black Friday shoppers, can be found in a Fiscal Times article. Thomas also has been quoted on her research in the Charlotte Observer and the Rock Hill Herald.

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