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Professors Watch Shoppers Reaction to Thanksgiving and Black Friday Shopping

Winthrop University

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Professors Watch Shoppers Reaction to Thanksgiving and Black Friday Shopping

Quick Facts

- Now that online shopping is so prevalent and the economy is a little wobbly, Professor Jane Thomas said stores are having to do something different to bring increasingly savvy customers into their stores. This year, the trend is for stores to open on Thanksgiving Day.
- In early shopping studies, Thomas and Peters found that shoppers band with other family members or friends to plan shopping trips with military precision.



Jane Thomas

ROCK HILL, S.C. - [Winthrop University Marketing Professor Jane Thomas](#) won't be holiday shopping on **Thanksgiving Day** and **Black Friday** but she will be interviewing customers about their buying habits.

She and [Associate Business Dean Cara Peters](#) are among the few scholars in the country who study **Black Friday shopping habits**.

Now that online shopping is so prevalent and the economy is a little wobbly, Thomas said stores are having to do something different to bring increasingly **savvy customers** into their stores. This year, the trend is for stores to open on **Thanksgiving Day**.

However, there may be some **backlash** about stores opening during the holiday because they are not giving their own employees a chance to enjoy time with their families, Thomas added.

For those who go away for the holidays, those families want something to do while they are at the beach, resort or other vacation destination. "The family may not necessarily be at grandma's house," Thomas said. "Shopping is very important to them as a diversion."

In early shopping studies, **Thomas** and **Peters** found that shoppers band with other family members or friends to plan shopping trips with **military precision**. Details such as planning which stores to hit in what order, which items to buy first, who is driving getaway cars and parking are all important to consider if shoppers want to achieve maximum savings.

With six fewer days for holiday shopping this year, Thomas said businesses will be doing everything they can to get customers in the store and pulling out their wallets. One store, Target, has tied its marketing campaign to a "**giving it forward**" theme. The company arranged to have actors from **three popular ABC sitcoms** on Wednesday night star in commercials during the shows in ways that connect characters from one show to the next.

It takes television viewers a few seconds to realize that the sitcom has ended and a commercial has begun.

Another change: [Amazon](#) is experimenting in New York and Los Angeles to have the [U.S. Postal Service](#) in those cities deliver **Black Friday items** ordered online on Sunday.

Yet **Thomas** cautions shoppers: "If you can wait, the best deals are going to come later."

For more information, contact **Thomas** at thomasj@winthrop.edu.

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