

Black Friday Is Changing How Consumers in Canada Shop During the Holidays

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Paul Briggs

Online consumers in Canada have reason to give thanks during Thanksgiving, even though the country celebrates the holiday more than a month earlier than the US. Retailers in Canada have embraced this weekend as a deals-inspired kickoff to the holiday shopping season, and almost half (43%) of consumers in Canada plan to shop Black Friday, according to the Retail Council of Canada's (RCC) second annual holiday shopping survey.

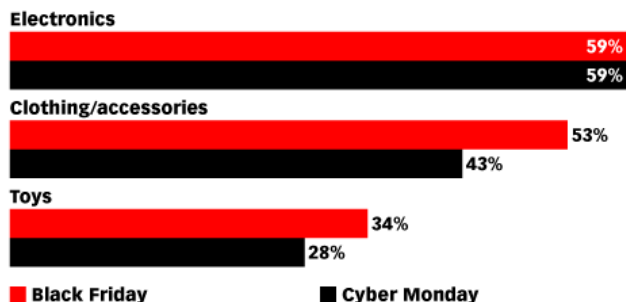
While physical cross-border shopping over the holiday season has a healthy tradition in Canada that goes back decades, online shopping expanded the opportunity for Canadians to get in on the deals. Almost the same number of consumers today plan to shop online (57%) as in-store (two-thirds) this holiday season, per a JLL Research survey of consumers in Canada. Almost a third (31%) plan to do both.

“Retailers in Canada are now very proactive and are planning very specific merchandise for Black Friday and Cyber Monday,” said Ed Strapagiel, a Toronto-based retail consultant. “It’s a weekend where consumers look for certain merchandise, which tends to be medium- to large-ticket items where the savings are tangible.”

The top product category for Black Friday and Cyber Monday shopping is electronics, according to an October 2019 Rakuten Canada survey. Some 59% of respondents planned to shop for these goods on both days. Clothing and accessories was the second-most-popular category, followed by toys.

Leading Product Categories that Internet Users in Canada Plan to Buy During 2019 Black Friday vs. Cyber Monday, Oct 2019

% of respondents



Note: ages 18+; among the 53% of respondents who plan to shop on Black Friday and the 43% who plan to shop on Cyber Monday
Source: Rakuten.ca conducted by Ignite Lab as cited in press release, Nov 12, 2019

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“Going back five years ago, there was definitely some hesitation [in terms of] shopping for fashion and apparel online,” said Jennifer LaForge, general manager at Rakuten Canada. “We’ve seen a huge surge in the category as Canadian consumers begin to trust online shopping.”

The holiday shopping season in the country used to be punctuated by Boxing Day, the day after Christmas that had consumers flocking to retailers for the best post-Christmas deals. But this period, which was often stretched up to a week, has diminished in importance thanks to Black Friday. According to the RCC survey, Canadians who plan to shop on Black Friday planned to spend 38% of their holiday budget on Black Friday vs. Boxing Day (30%).

“We’re seeing the volume of sales over that Boxing Week period decline year over year,” LaForge said. “That has a lot to do with the deals and the offers happening earlier in November.”

The shopping year is shifting from one that hinged mainly on the final six weeks of the year to one that is heavily influenced by online retailer discount-driven events, like Amazon's Prime Day. According to LaForge, the shopping year in Canada is event-driven, led by the weekend of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, followed by Boxing week, and not far behind is Prime Day in July.

Amazon's impact in Canada is being felt throughout the holiday season, too: It's the top destination for holiday shopping, with 60% of consumers planning on shopping on the site, according to Deloitte's 2019 holiday survey.