

Amazon is rolling out the holiday shopping season 'earlier than ever'

Article

The news: It feels like pumpkin spice season has only just arrived, but **Amazon** is already kicking the holiday shopping season into high gear.

- On Monday, the company announced that it's unveiling "Black Friday-worthy deals earlier than ever" via [Amazon.com/epicdeals](https://www.amazon.com/epicdeals).

- Amazon also launched a new feature that allows **Prime** users to send gifts to friends with only a phone number and email address. Recipients will then receive a notification asking them to input their address to accept the gift.

More on this: When Amazon says it's time to shop, other retailers follow suit.

- Last year's **Amazon Prime Day** may be to blame for the earlier holiday season. The event was pushed to October amid the pandemic, coinciding with early holiday shoppers looking to buy gifts online. In May 2020, a **daVinci Payments** survey found that 71% of US adults planned to do more than half of their holiday shopping online.
- That perfect storm caused Prime Day 2020 to be one of Amazon's most successful ever. Gross merchandise sales worldwide increased by **\$3.23 billion** from 2019 to **\$10.39 billion** in 2020—the highest year-over-year increase since the event began in 2015.
- This year, instead of keeping its October date, Prime Day took place during the summer once again. But Amazon's early introduction of holiday shopping will likely help it reap the same benefits.

Other companies took note of Amazon's holiday head start: Other big-box retailers are rolling out their own early discounts.

- **Target** is echoing the timing of last year's Prime Day by announcing that its three-day shopping event, **Target Deal Days**, will take place from October 10 to 12, per Retail Dive.
- Target Deal Days will begin alongside its **Holiday Price Match Guarantee**, which will run through December 24.

The challenge: Supply chain issues could cause hiccups, while issues like labor and microchip shortages could hamper holiday season sales for some big-box retailers.

- Some electronics, like the **Playstation 5** or **Xbox Series X**, are still in short supply and sell out online almost immediately, an issue that could be exacerbated by holiday shoppers flooding store pages in the same one-month period.
- Supply chain issues could also cause merchants to roll back their most extreme discounts. Ahead of Prime Day 2021, many merchants were unable to stock up the supply to match consumer demand, per **CNBC**.

Why it's worth watching: When the biggest power in ecommerce sets an early start to a shopping season, others quickly follow to avoid missing out.

- Watch for other big-box retailers, like **Walmart**, rolling out holiday shopping earlier this year and next.