

# Say goodbye to open brick-and-mortar stores on Thanksgiving

## Article

**The news:** Big-box retailers are bucking the decade-long trend of opening stores on Thanksgiving evening as an early kickoff for Black Friday.

- **Target** said it will make Thanksgiving Day closures a permanent policy.

- Other major stores like **Walmart**, **Best Buy**, and **The Home Depot** will close again this year but haven't committed to a future plan yet, **per** the Wall Street Journal.

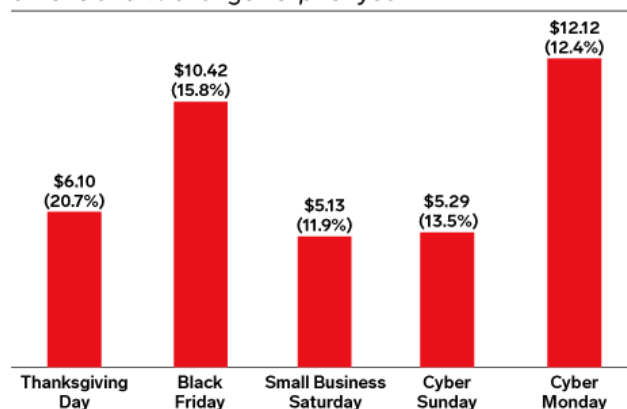
**What this means:** Early openings likely began as a way to get more consumers in stores to compete with the rising popularity of online shopping on platforms like **Amazon**. But now that these retailers have spent the pandemic beefing up their own ecommerce capabilities, many are finding the practice unnecessary.

While brick-and-mortar stores will still reign supreme on Black Friday itself, consumers are more **open** to shopping online on other days—including Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving Day ecommerce sales will see the highest growth of all Cyber Five days this year, rising **20.7%** to **\$6.10 billion**, **per** our estimates.

#### US Cyber Five Retail Ecommerce Holiday Season Sales, by Shopping Day, 2021

billions and % change vs. prior year



Note: excludes travel and event tickets, payments such as bill pay, taxes, or money transfers, food services and drinking place sales, gambling and other vice goods sales; includes products or services ordered using the internet, regardless of the method of payment or fulfillment; retail ecommerce sales are for Nov and Dec of each year  
Source: eMarketer, Sep 2021

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Plus, the holiday shopping season is starting earlier and becoming more spread out, making it less important to stay open on a single day.

- Over two-thirds (68%) of US adults planned to begin their holiday shopping before Thanksgiving this year, up from 61% in 2020, **per** Deloitte's 2021 Holiday Retail Survey.
- Retailers have **responded** by offering Black Friday deals as early as October—also due in part to the success of Amazon's October 2020 **Prime Day**.

- A tight labor market and supply chain issues could also be influencing retailer decisions this year.

Finally, keeping stores closed on the holiday can generate goodwill.

- The practice of opening on the holiday has drawn criticism for keeping employees from celebrating with their families—and for doing the same to customers, who would have to give up time typically reserved for Thanksgiving dinner to head to stores for doorbusters.
- A majority (72%) of consumers support retailers' decision to keep stores closed on Thanksgiving, **according to** Deloitte's Pre-Thanksgiving Pulse survey.

**The bottom line:** Though Thanksgiving Day store openings have been the norm for roughly a decade, the practice seems to be drawing to a close almost as soon as it began. Today's rapidly changing ecommerce landscape and shifting consumer behaviors may be the nail in the coffin.