

# Kalahari.com strains under deluge of orders

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Kalahari.com is working around the clock to ensure as few order delays as possible, after complaints flooded social media and consumer site Hellopeter, the Naspers-owned online retailer said yesterday, 9 December 2014.



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Shoppers complained mainly about items that had been ordered and paid for being out of stock and difficulties with accessing the e-commerce website.

Kalahari marketing director Liz Hillcock said the website had experienced huge volumes of traffic on Black Friday (28 November), which placed it under strain. It experienced a similar situation the following week, but was now functioning optimally again.

"This is not unheard of when there is an overwhelming peak in concurrent traffic," Hillock said. "Takealot experienced similar issues, as did Superbalist during the same week (and) other international retailers such as Best Buys."

Often referred to as the busiest shopping day of the year in the US, Black Friday traditionally falls on the day following Thanksgiving, with retailers offering big discounts. Its origin dates back to 1966 when police in Philadelphia used the term to describe heavy car and pedestrian traffic occurring after the holiday.

But the day later began to symbolise an important event when US retailers made roaring sales. South African retailers including Checkers and DionWired got into the action this year too.

"We did experience some delays in processing a small proportion of the Black Friday orders," Hillock said. "The response to the sale was phenomenal and our warehousing team has been working day and night to get orders out of the door and to our customers before Christmas."

One aggrieved customer said he had battled to retrieve money from Kalahari after the company cancelled his order due to items being out of stock.

"We take this seriously," Hillock said. "Where there is an unplanned processing or supplier delay, we do like to inform our customers and keep them informed every step of the way."

By global standards, the online shopping segment in SA is small, but a growing number of consumers are turning to the internet to browse and shop.

In October, it was announced that Takealot.com and Kalahari would merge. The move was largely driven by local online retailers' need for economies of scale to compete successfully against brick and mortar, and foreign counterparts such as Amazon and Alibaba.

Source: Business Day

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