

SA consumers will need a good reason to shop this Black Friday

Last year's Black Friday retail sales massively underperformed for many reasons, according to Marino Sigalas, account director at The MediaShop, who says that some consumers were not comfortable with the thought of being shoulder to shoulder with other shoppers during a pandemic.



“Although we are in a better space this year versus last in terms of our case numbers, there is no way of knowing how open consumers will be to the mayhem that is usually associated with Black Friday,” says Sigalas. “Last year many retailers ran longer duration sales, for example, for the whole week in order to get consumers in with fewer crowds. This didn’t seem to work though and although there will most likely be similar and longer promotions this year, there is no way to know what the uptake will be.”

Online sales across the country continue to rise, especially in a pandemic but the same effect has not been mirrored in store yet. Major benefactors of online shopping include Takealot.com and Checkers Sixty60.



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“During the pandemic, consumers have been limiting their number of shopping trips but increasing their basket size when shopping; this should be a positive indicator for Black Friday but it didn’t pan out that way last year. Shoppers will need a really good reason to come out shopping this year,” he says.

“Consumers in the lower income bracket are also shopping closer to home to avoid public transport costs. Local, corner shop retailers have benefitted from this trend,” says Sigalas.

He adds that there is a feeling that there is some “Black Friday fatigue” with consumers and the specials are no longer as dramatic as in years gone by.

Hurting Xmas sales

Retailers incorporate Black Friday as a standard strategy for sales and can't pull out or they would be down on targets. Therefore, Sigalas says to expect a number of retailers to double down again this year to breathe some fresh air and reignite the phenomenon.

"I really think that retailers have hurt their Christmas sales with Black Friday, effectively they're taking money out of the market for December," says he adds. "However, they can't afford not to be in the mix or their competitors will benefit. When Black Friday was new in SA and not every retailer was on board, it was an opportunity to steal share early in the season, but it's now more about protecting your own share."

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