

Black Friday



As the calendar turns past Thanksgiving, we find ourselves in a familiar season – one celebrated for its generous discounts, though its deeper nuances remain largely unknown to most of us. The unofficial holiday gets its name due to the heavy traffic and chaos caused in the late 1960s in Philadelphia by large numbers of suburban tourists coming into the city to begin their holiday shopping. Over the years the Friday after Thanksgiving has evolved from a day-long frenzy of discounted shopping to an extended weekend of sales, encompassing Cyber Monday, and increasingly, the entire week, or the Black Friday Creep.

In American culture, Black Friday holds a place of significance, symbolising the height of consumerism. On social media, images of shoppers camping outside stores in the early hours, braving the cold, have become iconic. While initially this was a uniquely American event, Black Friday has transcended borders, influencing retail habits worldwide. Countries around the globe now host their versions of Black Friday sales, though the cultural context and impact can vary significantly from that in the United States.

Economically, Black Friday represents a bellwether for the retail industry. Retailers offer significant discounts that year after year draw in millions of shoppers eager to snag deals

for holiday gifts and the occasional home appliance. This consumer behaviour reflects not just a pursuit of savings but has become a ritualistic aspect of American Thanksgiving. As an economic indicator, Black Friday sales offer insights into consumer confidence and spending patterns. It's not uncommon for this period to account for a significant chunk of annual retail sales. Retailers will therefore compete fiercely amongst each other, using doorbusters and early-bird specials to attract consumers, hoping to outdo sales figures from previous years.

As technology has evolved, so has Black Friday, with the advent of e-commerce having transformed the event. Online shopping has become an integral part of the event, leading to the creation of Cyber Monday, another day of discounts dedicated to online sales. This shift has not only provided convenience to consumers but has also led to a prolonged shopping period, extending deals beyond just one day. Despite its popularity, Black Friday is not without controversy. It has been criticised for promoting unchecked consumerism, contributing to environmental concerns, and placing undue pressure on retail employees. Incidents of shopper aggression and safety concerns have also sparked debate about the societal impact of such an event!

For further information

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