10 Surprising Stats about the 2013 Holiday Shopping Season
By Selena Marajian

Ah, the holiday retail season, when most of us scurry around, shopping for gifts for loved ones, and trying to take advantage of the best sales we can find. You've been here before: You know the score.

Or do you? Here are a few interesting details you may not know about this year's winter spending dash.

- About one quarter of Americans surveyed recently said that they never miss or usually visit at least one store on Black Friday.
- Apparently some Black Friday participants from seasons past stayed home this year, though, or maybe they just bought less, as the total take for the weekend, per the National Retail Federation, was down by $1.7 billion, or 3 percent.
- If 3 percent doesn't seem too meaningful, consider this: The holiday season accounts for between 20 percent and 40 percent of typical retailers' total annual sales.
- Those who think the idea of big crowds crushing their way into stores in the middle of the night sounds dreadful can take heart, because online shopping continues to grow rapidly. Black Friday was this holiday season's first billion-dollar-plus online shopping day, with the total online take for the day of $1.2 billion, up a hefty 15 percent over last year.
- Not only are shoppers shopping online more (a record 66 million of them on Black Friday), they're also increasingly shopping via their mobile devices. Yes, you probably knew that. But you might not realize just how fast the shift has been. On Black Friday, for example, Walmart's website may have been a little slow at times according to http://www.dailyfinance.com/quote/nyse/wal-mart-stores/wmt, but that's because it had some 400 million pages viewed, and 53 percent of those were perused from smartphones or tablets. The number of purchases made via mobile devices tripled the previous year's level.
- Parental love, meanwhile, is close to boundless, even if our bank accounts are far from it. Fully 57 percent of parents reported that they were going to take on debt over the holidays in order to buy gifts for their kids. Interestingly, per a recent survey, those with household incomes of less than $35,000 said they were willing to take on an average of $700 in debt, while those bringing in $75,000 or more were thinking about $300.
- Taking on debt isn't the end of the world as long as it gets paid off promptly. But many Americans don't seem to have such a fiscally responsible outlook: 36 percent in one survey said that buying presents for loved ones was more important than sticking to a budget or not taking on more credit card debt.

- Retailers will be happy to note that of the 90 percent of Americans planning to buy gifts this season, almost a third of them (31 percent) approach the task with no predetermined spending limit.
- If that sounds financially shaky, consider that fully 55 percent of adult Americans surveyed in September had not yet saved any money for the holiday shopping season.
- Still, the National Retail Federation is hopeful about the 2013 holiday shopping season, projecting a 3.9 percent increase in total sales over 2012.

The holiday shopping season will always be with us, though it's always changing and evolving. But traditionalists can take comfort that some things don't change too quickly: About 26 percent of shoppers plan to buy Barbies for girls, and more than 10 percent are planning on Legos for boys.

Source: AOL Daily Finance, http://www.dailyfinance.com/2013/12/13/2013-holiday-shopping-season-10-surprising-statistics/

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