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VOL. 126 | NO. 233 | Wednesday, November 30, 2011

Guerrilla Sales & Marketing

The Demise Of Black Friday

By [Lori Turner-Wilson](#)

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Lori Turner-Wilson

The Black Friday moniker was coined in the 1960s as the first day of the year retailers turn a profit or operate in the black. Consumers know it as the day after Thanksgiving when retailers offer deep discounts to kick off the holiday shopping season.

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Black Friday has historically encouraged shoppers to spend billions on holiday gifts each year. In 2008, however, retailers endured the weakest holiday season since 1972. Gift buying became a more arduous process, as shoppers sought out the best deals with more patience and practicality than in years past. The shopping frenzy dissipated.

Retailers threw a myriad of marketing and pricing strategies against the wall in an effort to drive more sales, including offering a Black Friday preview sale on Thanksgiving evening – called by some Black Midnight or Black Eve.

While a few established retailers have tested this Thursday opening in years past, this is the first year a majority followed suit. To no surprise, a recent survey reports that 87 percent of shoppers say stores should be closed on Thanksgiving to allow time with family.

This wouldn't be the first time, however, that big retail has made a concerted effort to change our holiday traditions. In 1939, retailers pressured President Franklin D. Roosevelt to move Thanksgiving one week to extend the holiday shopping season.

For many, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade is a holiday tradition, which in reality, began as a stunt marketing effort to drive holiday shoppers to the streets of New York.

With regard to Black Eve, however, retailers may have shot themselves in the foot. By further diluting the Black Friday frenzy and excitement by spreading the discounting into Thursday, retailers have begun a series of events that could lead to the demise of Black Friday as we know it.

Not only are door busters offered Thursday evening, they're also repeated throughout the holiday season – removing the sense of urgency shoppers once felt for Black Friday shopping.

You can now get many of the same deals online as you can in store, again, removing the need to get out to a brick-and-mortar store. This defeats the loss-leader door-buster strategy, as the objective is to get you in store with a deeply discounted must-have item so you'll buy a variety of other higher-margin items. They're counting on you to get caught up in the excitement.

If retailers aren't careful, Black Friday could look more like an entire month of deep discounting.

Retailers that will do well despite this shift in strategy are those investing in more efficient web experiences including enhanced mobile sites that

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RECORD TOTALS	DAY	WEEK	YEAR
PROPERTY SALES	53	204	14,273
MORTGAGES	101	304	21,386
FORECLOSURE NOTICES	0	70	9,038
BUILDING PERMITS	0	289	36,440
BANKRUPTCIES	67	239	17,417
BUSINESS LICENSES	17	51	5,455
UTILITY CONNECTIONS	79	337	25,613
MARRIAGE LICENSES	0	41	5,371

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Morningstar	-34	-1.1	3,126
Nasdaq	-35	-1.3	2,614
NYSE	0	0.0	7,539
Morningstar Small Cap	-83	-1.8	4,675

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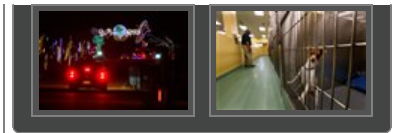


offer a more complete shopping experience.

Cyber Monday sales will be on the rise for the foreseeable future – with these shoppers nearly doubling over the past five years from 59 to over 106 million.

So, is it time to say goodbye to Black Friday and hello to Cyber December?

Lori Turner-Wilson is an award-winning columnist and managing partner of RedRover Sales & Marketing, www.redrovercompany.com. You can follow RedRover on Twitter (@redrovercompany and @loriturner) and Facebook (facebook.com/redrovercompany).



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