

SEASONAL TRADING

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Twelve trends of Christmas: this year's festive themes

Christmas is fast approaching and retailers are preparing for a frenetic shopping season. *Retail Week* looks at the themes that will dominate how people shop this Christmas.

12 A monster product

All the toy retailers have tipped Xeno the monster to be the big winner this Christmas. Xeno is a demanding toy that needs to have his nose wiped by kids and cries if he is ignored. A delight for kids but will no doubt drive parents up the wall.

11 Games to sell well

Falling demand for tablets will result in unspectacular sales growth of 2.5% for the electricals sector, according to Verdict. However, that will be offset by price cuts to make the Xbox One and PS4 consoles more affordable. Game will be among the big winners this Christmas as consumers clamour for the cut-price consoles.

10 Fashion on the up

Metallic numbers and killer cocktail dresses are poised to take centre stage at Christmas parties this year as shoppers splash out on clothes. Verdict forecasts that clothing and footwear sales will rise 3.5%.

9 Last-minute shopping

Last Christmas Visa estimated that 15 million shoppers hit the high street on the Monday before Christmas and spent £2.6m per minute. That trend is expected to be repeated as shoppers become more accustomed to last-minute shopping as retailers adapt their business models to accommodate panic buyers.

8 Planned spending

Some shoppers are planning their Christmas early this year. More than half of people polled in an ICM survey for *Retail Week* believe they will have done their Christmas shopping before December. In fact, 8% said they had already done it by the start of October, a greater percentage than the past three years.

7 Black Friday kick-off

Last year Black Friday, the discounting event that kick-starts Christmas spending, started to make real waves in the UK. Asda, John Lewis, Currys and Shop Direct all launched special deals and shoppers embraced it. This year, Black Friday is likely to be turbo-charged. John Lewis boss Andy Street believes it will be bigger than last year and Shop Direct will hold a week-long event.



Retailers including Asda will embrace Black Friday again this year. Xeno monster toys (right) are predicted to sell well

6 Convenience is king

Convenience has been one of the biggest trends in retail over the past few years and this Christmas it will come to the fore as shoppers take advantage of services such as click-and-collect. Street believes a third of online sales will involve click-and-collect this Christmas. His colleague, John Lewis online boss Mark Lewis, said last week that "convenience will be the battleground" on which this Christmas will be fought and has pushed back the cut-off time for next-day delivery to 8pm.

5 Christmas Day shopping

Christmas Day is again poised to be as busy a shopping day as the days preceding it. All the tablets and smartphones unwrapped on Christmas morning will have shoppers clicking away to grab deals while the Queen's speech is on in the background. Last year 117 million visits to retailers' websites were made on Christmas day. That number looks likely to rise this year.

4 Mobile shopping

Retailers have heralded a "mobile Christmas" for the past two years, but still the growth in m-commerce shows no sign of slowing. Shop Direct last week said mobile, which in the retailer's most recent quarter outstripped its desktop sales, was a key driver of growth this year. That is only going to intensify as time-strapped consumers shop on-the-go this Christmas.

3 Personalisation

Shoppers want to give their loved ones something special so personalised products should fly off the shelves. Selfridges has gone big on personalisation.

The department store group is offering personalised Christmas sacks, coffee mugs and even Nutella jars.

2 Discounters to do well

Aldi and Lidl's rise at the expense of the big four shows no sign of stopping and they are tipped to perform well this Christmas as the mainstream grocers battle to win back momentum.

Kantar figures last Christmas recorded strong growth for Aldi and Lidl, while Sainsbury's was the only one of the big four able to resist pressure from the discounters. However, Sainsbury's sales have now begun to slow, leaving the field wide open for Aldi and Lidl. The German discounters are raising the stakes and this Christmas Aldi is attempting to lure customers in with inexpensive caviar.

1 Old favourites popular

As ever, perfume and make-up will top Christmas lists, and health and beauty sales are poised to rise 3.7% this year, according to Verdict. Debenhams boss Michael Sharp said the department store retailer's prowess in the category will help it emerge as a "destination for gifting" this year.