



Contacts:

Jordan Kercheval

Edelman

425-403-7630

jordan.kercheval@edelman.com

Sarah Druffel

Carson College of Business

509-335-4345

sarah.druffel@wsu.edu

As Enthusiasm for Black Friday Continues to Fade, COVID-19 May Bring an End to Big Shopping Holidays

This year, 77% of PNW shoppers intend to skip in-store shopping on Black Friday, and 65% report disinterest in the well-known shopping holiday

PULLMAN, Wash., Nov. 17, 2020 – Holiday shopping won't revolve around big shopping events this year with less support and interest in both Black Friday and Cyber Monday, according to a report from Washington State University's Carson College of Business (CCB).

The college's fourth annual Holiday Retail Report finds an overwhelming majority of PNW shoppers don't plan to shop in-store on Thanksgiving Day (83%) or Black Friday (77%). Although interest in major shopping events continues to decline, 7 in 10 consumers think shopping in-store during the holiday season is worth it when it's to help local businesses stay open during the pandemic.

"The pandemic will have a significant impact on shopping behaviors this year, with more consumers shopping online than ever before," said Joan Giese, CCB clinical associate professor of marketing.

"However, despite these changes, we've found that many consumers feel that holiday shopping will provide a sense of normalcy during an unfamiliar holiday season."

This year's report surveyed more than 1,700 PNW consumers' attitudes and perceptions toward holiday shopping during COVID-19 and sought to understand how the pandemic is changing shopping behaviors.

Key findings include:

- **COVID-19 has had a significant impact on shopping behaviors, but they're not all permanent.**
 - 91% of respondents report their shopping habits are different from how they used to shop prior to the pandemic, and 86% share their pandemic shopping experience has been frustrating.
 - Shoppers aren't shopping more online by choice. 74% of respondents wish they could go back to how they shopped before the pandemic.
 - Unsurprisingly, 50% of shoppers report changes to their shopping habits are primarily due to COVID-19, and plan to return to their regular shopping habits once it is safe to do so.



- **Allure and support for Black Friday continue to decrease, especially amid the pandemic.**
 - PNW consumers increasingly feel the holiday season should be about family rather than shopping. 79% feel it is irresponsible for stores to be open on Thanksgiving as it takes employees away from their family.
 - 80% of shoppers wish more stores would stay closed on Thanksgiving, and 71% report they are more likely to support stores that stay closed on Thanksgiving in the future.
 - 76% say they would much rather do something else than shop on Black Friday, a 10-percentage point increase from 2019.
- **Shoppers feel an increased responsibility to support local businesses during the pandemic.**
 - 71% of shoppers say shopping in-person is worth it when it's to help local businesses stay open.
 - 81% of respondents shared it's hard for them to watch their favorite stores have to close.
- **With holiday spirits largely dampened due to COVID-19, holiday shopping may be a source of much needed cheer and comfort.**
 - 57% of consumers expressed feelings of anxiety, loneliness or overall unenthusiasm when asked to describe their feelings about the upcoming holiday season.
 - 54% report they are not looking forward to the holidays this year because it won't feel the same as previous years.
 - However, holiday shopping will provide a much-needed sense of normalcy for many. 68% report shopping helps them to feel normal in a not-so-normal world, and 41% are looking forward to holiday shopping more than usual since it will bring back comfort and normalcy.

View the full report at: <https://business.wsu.edu/holidayretailstudy/>

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The WSU Carson College of Business is accredited across all business disciplines at the baccalaureate, masters and doctoral levels by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. Faculty across disciplines produce scholarly and applied research at the main campus in Pullman as well as at urban campuses in Vancouver, Everett and the Tri-Cities. International activities include academic centers in China and Switzerland as well as thriving partnerships with several schools around the globe. Innovative online programs supplement face-to-face offerings.