

Pre-Christmas shopping figures show similar patterns to 2011 as consumers and retailers play 'cat and mouse'

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Discounting before January now the new 'Sales' period

Shopper footfall in the run up to the 2012 Christmas period was similar to that of 2011, although not quite as high as that bumper year, figures released today show.

The Ipsos Retail Traffic Index (RTI), which is compiled by Ipsos (<http://www.ipsos-retailperformance.com>) Retail Performance and records the level of footfall in non-food stores across the UK, highlights similar patterns of pre-Christmas shopping activity, with price discounting before Christmas Day now apparently a more common strategy among high street retailers.

Across the UK, shopper numbers in the week commencing the 23rd of December were up (28.3%) compared to November. The best performing region of the UK for retailers in the same week was Scotland where shopper numbers were 7.1% higher compared with the same week of 2011.

High street retailers in London and the South East region experienced a drop in footfall in December, with 2012 down 6.9% against 2011. However, London and the South East maintained its shopper levels best last week, only seeing a week on week drop of 10.2% the w/c 23rd December compared to the previous week (w/c 16th December), against a UK average of -12.8%.

Commenting on these latest UK retail footfall figures, Peter Luff, President of Ipsos Retail Performance, said: "Retailing appears to be in a period of transition and our latest RTI statistics show that the more advanced retailers are adapting their pricing, promotional and marketing strategies over a longer period to attract customers into their stores. Pre-Christmas sales have now become more common and the traditional post-Christmas Sales are simply a continuation of this longer more managed trend.

"As has become the tradition, many consumers hold onto their money to take advantage of even greater discounts after Christmas, especially for seasonal stock that retailers really need to sell, but on the whole it appears that most shoppers now see retailers offering discounted goods throughout the entire festive period.

"It really has become a game of cat and mouse between shoppers and retailers, especially as retailers are competing with each other in challenging economic times. Knowing the customer - how they think, behave and are likely to shop - has becoming an even more critical element of the 'operational differential' for retailers as we progress into 2013."

Ends

About Ipsos (<http://www.ipsos-retailperformance.com>) Retail Performance

Ipsos Retail Performance provides footfall monitoring solutions, shopper tracking systems and in-store behavioural research to retailers worldwide. Its core products - Shopper Count, Shopper Interact and

Shopper Engage – scientifically measure all aspects of a shopper experience from store entry to exit. It supplies national and international retailers with essential business metrics to drive accountability and performance improvement.

Ipsos Retail Performance is home to the Retail Traffic Index series, which for over 10 years has been the industry's leading tracker of national, regional and sector retail footfall trends. It is also co-founder of the KPMG/Ipsos Retail Think Tank, offering thought leadership on the state of retail health and the future of retailing.

More information on Ipsos Retail Performance can be found at www.ipsos-retailperformance.com

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