



Welcome to Cyber Week.

GE Capital's Retail Finance business and tech start-up, Hukkster, explore the impact of an extended shopping season, widespread online promotions, and digital shopping tools on 2012 holiday spending.



imagination at work

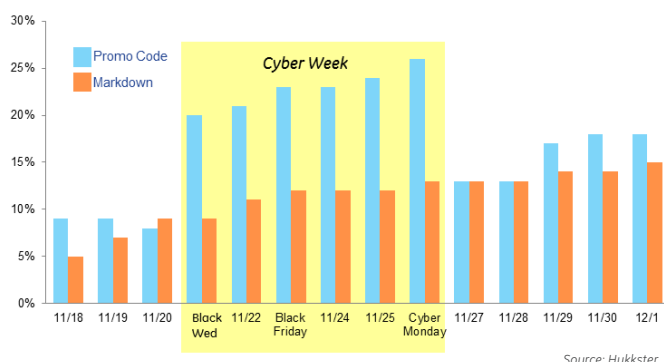


The 2012 holiday shopping period grew substantially,

officially kicking off a full day earlier than in years past. Retailers offered extended store hours and pervasive deals and promotions. But the real story this holiday came down to online shopping changes. This season marked an unprecedented length of online holiday deals. In total, what was once the exclusive domain of **Cyber Monday** has **now transitioned into a full Cyber Week, perhaps even, a Cyber Month.**

Promotions played a big role in extending the shopping season. Based on data from NYC-based Internet tech start-up Hukkster, founded by two former J.Crew merchants, Cyber Week savings started as early as Thanksgiving Eve, with an average savings of 32%. What is even more interesting, however, is that the often overlooked or under-analyzed coupon codes and blanket promotions represented approximately 70% of these savings. On top of that, GE Capital's survey conducted through Crowdtap found that 74% of customers reported that a coupon code often/always influences their purchase decision. This begs the question: **Are retailers effectively reaching their 'savings hungry' consumer?** To Hukkster co-founders Erica Bell and Katie Finnegan, retailers may be leaving potential sales on the table. As Bell and Finnegan put it, "Consumers are looking for ways to sort through the clutter in their inboxes and access relevant content...but they need a way to silence the noise to get to the retail information they want and need."

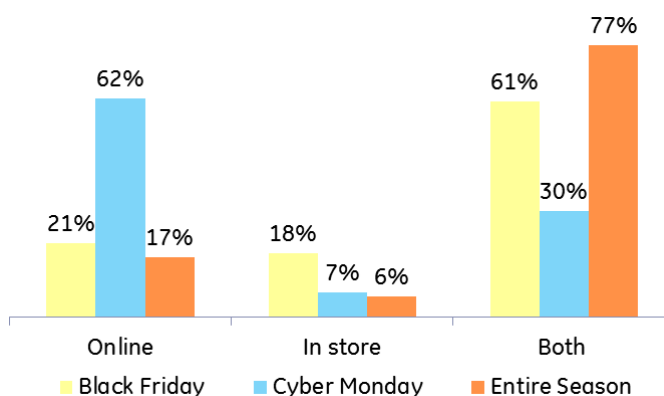
Promotions led to weeklong cyber surge



This season represented a new chapter in consumer choice,

one where shoppers were liberated to snag deals on their own terms. What was traditionally an in-store event, Black Friday has evolved to include aggressive online deals as well. And, consumers are embracing this change. This year, shoppers took similar advantage of attractive holiday deals—online and in-store. In the GE Capital survey, 77% of consumers reported they shopped both in-store and online throughout the holiday shopping season. And **90% of customers who shopped online reported it made holiday shopping easier.**

Majority shop multichannel all season



As a result, **online shopping drove record sales this year at \$42.3 billion**, a 14% increase over last year according to ComScore.

Recapping holiday sales trends, Hukkster found the most significant discounts in merchandise occurred between Black Friday and Cyber Monday, giving way to a true six-day stretch that could rightfully be dubbed 'Cyber Week'. **In fact, the single largest jump in discounted merchandise was on November 21st, "Black Wednesday."**



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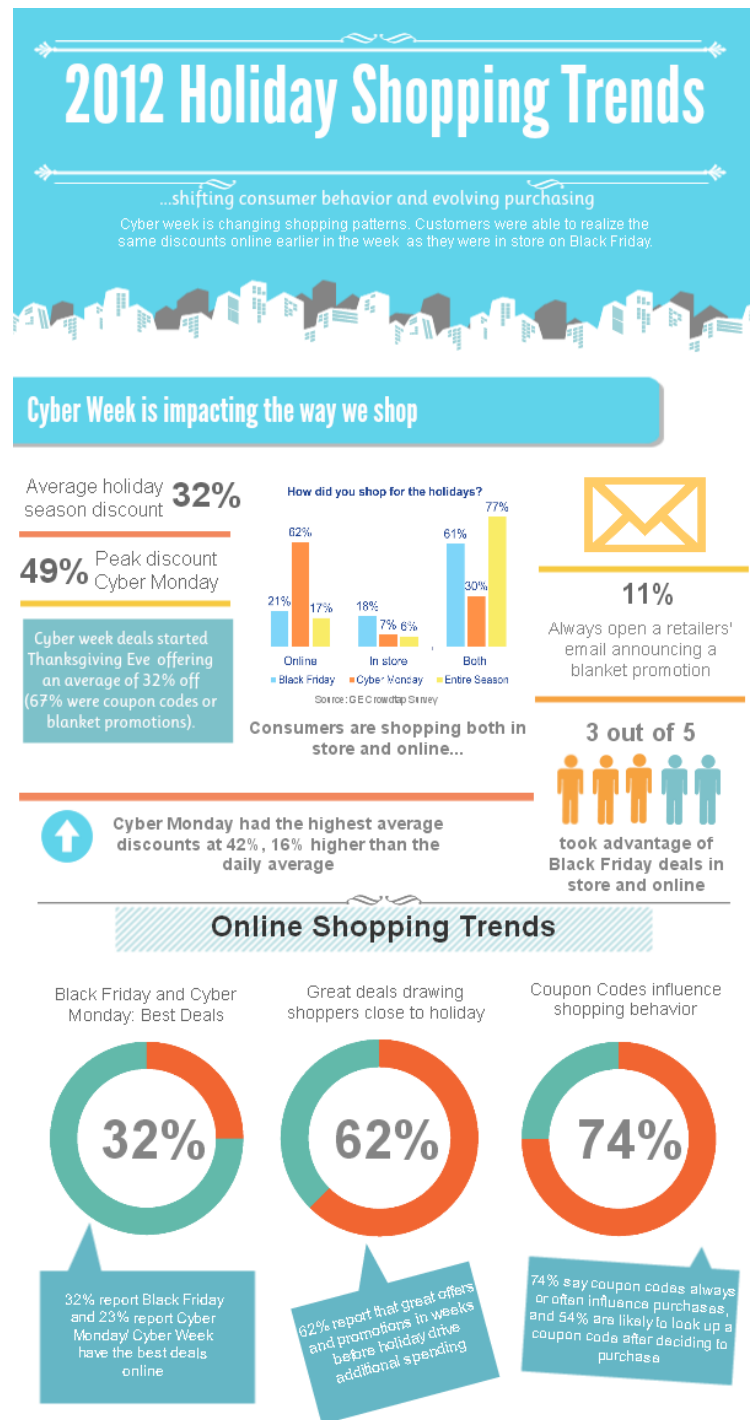


Streamlining the hunt for savings provides a significant advantage for shoppers (and for retailers).

Hukkster's data indicates that approximately 70% of the savings available are from coupon codes or blanket promotions, even though conversion rates are approximately 16% higher on markdowns. However, GE Capital's survey points out that less than 15% of respondents report they always open a retailer's email announcing a blanket promotion and return to the site to make a purchase on a product previously considered. **This gap represents a significant opportunity for retailers to more thoughtfully reach customers when the items they want get marked down or go on promotion.**

Hukkster, and digital tools like it, are changing the way consumers curate and consolidate the items and discounts they desire—and, consumers are certainly latching on. Hukkster allows online shoppers to install a button in their web browser, akin to Pinterest, to "hukk" or flag items they want to buy from a store. The site will then notify the user when the hukk'd item is marked down or goes on sale.

Digital tools also empower retailers with the knowledge they need to stay top-of-mind; they now have an opportunity to help shoppers locate and purchase exactly what they want. As for this holiday season, retailers hit the ground running, relaying promotions early and often, but there still exists a strong opportunity to transform more of these promotions into purchases.



Sources: GE Capital's survey conducted through CrowdTap and Hukkster's data

About Hukkster's business

Hukkster (www.hukkster.com) tracks specific products online and alerts shoppers of price fluctuations and promotional offers so they're always in the know. With real-time pricing notifications, Hukkster is revolutionizing the way people shop online. Follow us on facebook at facebook.com/hukkster and twitter @hukkster.

About GE Capital's Retail Finance business

GE Capital's Retail Finance business is among the country's most successful retail lenders, with 80 years of experience in consumer financing. The business, with its lending entity, GE Capital Retail Bank, provides customized credit programs to retailers and consumers in the United States and Canada that help drive sales. This includes private label and bankcard credit programs to major national, regional, and independent retailers in the U.S., as well as private label credit programs, promotional and installment lending, bankcards and financial services for consumers through dealers, contractors, manufacturers, healthcare practices, and service providers across nearly 20 industries. We are not just bankers; we help clients build better businesses. More information can be found at www.gocapital.com and twitter.com/GoGECapital.

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