

Christmas Shopping 2011 and Planning for 2012 - UK - February 2012

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“There’s a good chance that 2012 will finish on an upward trend. The Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics should add to the feel good factor. That doesn’t mean that 2012 will be easy for retailers, but Christmas 2012 should see some growth on 2011.”

– Richard Perks, Director of Retail Research

In this report we answer the key questions:

- **What are the lessons from 2011?**
- **How will the balance of power between the internet and the high street pan out?**
- **So how are consumers going to behave in 2012?**
- **And what about Christmas 2012 and a look further out?**
- **So what about customer loyalty?**

2011 was a tough year for retailers, with October and November being particularly difficult because of the unusually warm weather. So retailers became increasingly cautious through the autumn and the mid-season fashion sales were the biggest anyone can remember. But in the event, consumers came out and spent record amounts in December, but not before the first half of the month had been worryingly quiet.

So if there is one key message to retailers it has to be - Hold your nerve. The name of the game pre-Christmas is to maximise full price sales and then to cut prices hard in the Sales to clear stock. A retailer who goes on sale before Christmas is, in effect, hoisting a flag to advertise the fact that he has problems and he also effectively devalues his merchandise – if it won’t sell at full price, will anyone want it at a cut price?

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