

# Gift Shopping Habits - UK - December 2009

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## What is this report about?

The retail sector continues to evolve its gifts offer, with the emphasis on calendar-specific occasions seemingly getting bigger as each year goes by. In the recession the gifts market is also a good area for retailers to focus their efforts on as people are less likely to cut back on purchasing for special occasions than they are on discretionary spending on themselves.

The gifts market is almost impossible to quantify as it potentially spans virtually every market, with any product in theory being suitable as a gift for someone. There are, however, certain product categories that predominate in the retail gifts market, with these being added to by money and vouchers, which are an increasingly popular option that avoids the unwanted gift nightmare.

## What have we found out?

- Consumers are turning away from traditional gifts in favour of gift vouchers/cards and money. Six out of ten adults gave money in 2009 (4 million more than in 2005), while 37% bought gift cards/vouchers (an increase of 2 million).
- Retailers need their gift ranges to stand out and better match individual interests and tastes. Four in ten adults (20 million) like to buy unusual/unique gifts and a similar proportion (equivalent to 19 million) like gifts to reflect the recipient's hobbies and interests.
- Different marketing approaches are needed to target the three in ten adults (15 million) who enjoy shopping for gifts and the quarter (12 million) who find looking for gifts a real chore.
- Inspiring and innovative gifts are needed in stores throughout the year to maximise sales to the 12 million who buy gifts for others on impulse, and the 9 million who like to self-treat.
- Stores and websites need to work in tandem to convert gift browsers into purchasers. Buying gifts over the internet has grown from only 17% of adults in 2005 to approaching 40% in 2009. More than four in ten adults (21 million) use the internet to browse for gift ideas.
- Unwanted gifts are most likely to be kept (16 million adults) or given to charity (15 million), although one in five will give them to other people as gifts.

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