



## Are you tracking the most important part of Black Friday? (Hint: It's not sales)

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As one of the busiest days of the year, Black Friday has always been a means of measuring business success. In 2016, 101.7 million people braved the crowds that day. The rest of the weekend also saw a spike in shoppers, with 64 million people in stores on Saturday and 33 million on Sunday. The bottom line in this: there are a lot of people in stores on Black Friday weekend.

It is absolutely critical for most brands and retailers to have strong in-store sales during Black Friday weekend. There is no doubt that exciting interactive displays get people's attention and encourage them to buy. But it is also true that great in-store displays can lead to a lift in online sales in the following hours, days, and weeks. Smart retailers and brands will take Cyber Monday sales into consideration when planning their Black Friday store displays. Engagement — in-store leading to online — should be the primary metric for determining return on investment on Black Friday marketing dollars.

Outlined below are best practices covering what data to collect, how to collect it, when to review it, and what questions to ask with it. By implementing these recommendations, retailers and brands will have greater insight into how their Black Friday displays create purchasing intention and loyalty that extend to Cyber Monday and beyond.

### Is your marketing budget optimized to make the best possible decisions?

For the last few years, brands and retailers have shifted marketing dollars from in-store marketing programs, such as investments in displays, to online marketing. While this may seem like a solid decision, one could argue that this is what Annie Duke, author of *Thinking in Bets - Making Smarter Decision When You Don't Have All the Facts*, would call "resulting."

In her book, Duke explains that resulting is "...our tendency to equate the quality of a decision with the quality of its outcome." She goes on to explain

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how a resulting mentality is flawed and can lead to reinforcing mediocre decisions that don't consider how luck, the influences of what we don't know, or outside factors influence the outcome of our decision. For example, continuing to increase online marketing spending just because online sales increased falls prey to this resulting mindset. Essentially, some marketing departments are just riding the wave of increased online spending while thinking their increased online marketing is solely responsible for the online sales increase. These mediocre decisions will eventually catch up with the brand or retailer, allowing their better decision-making competitors to enjoy greater market share.

### **How can marketers make better decisions?**

The only way to foster better decision-making is to look at the complete purchasing process and gather data from each decision point throughout the sales process. According to media reports, 79 percent of Americans shop online, but it's cost more than convenience that sways them, highlights this process through a reference from a Pew Research Center report about factors consumers take into consideration when shopping for something they've never bought before.

The results reveal that looking at or trying the product in person is either extremely important or somewhat important in 78 percent of these buying decisions. Being able to ask questions and buying from sellers they are familiar with were both either extremely important or somewhat important in 84 percent of these buying decisions. Furthermore, only 42 percent of consumers buy online without making it to the store.

Additionally, even though almost four out of five consumers are either looking at or trying the product in-store before making a purchase, it doesn't automatically mean they are purchasing the product while in-store. In fact, 86 percent of consumers compare prices from different sellers, mainly online. If you're of the former "resulting" mindset, that justified heavy online marketing spending at the expense of in-store marketing, then you've just missed out on some very important consumer data that would ultimately help you make better decisions.

Therefore, in preparing for Cyber Monday, it would be important for brands and retailers to know the following about in-store engagement:

- ◆ **Which products or product offerings are customers engaging with by:**
  - Region/geography
  - Retailer
- ◆ **How are they engaging?**
  - What information are they seeking through specific button pushes and screen views
  - Customer dwell time (is the message getting across or is it too complex)
- ◆ **What are the shopper demographics (age/gender) by product offering?**
- ◆ **Are customers happy or sad when viewing the product in-store?**

Knowing this underlying data then allows very targeted online messages for Cyber Monday as well as the following days, weeks and months. Yes — online sales will increase this year and brands and retailers will naturally ride this wave. Maximizing your results requires making the best possible marketing decisions, which is developed through capturing and understanding in-store engagement data.

### **How in-store engagement data fosters better marketing decisions**

On Black Friday as well as the following days, weeks and months, research shows customers will engage with your product in-store before committing to their

purchase. Capturing this engagement data allows brands and retailers to understand where, when, how and which customers are interacting with their products. This in-turn provides the necessary learning loop to quickly modify marketing messages based on geography and demographic.

Aligning online marketing campaigns with data obtained from in-store display engagement will enable some brands and retailers to win big (or at least bigger than others) during Cyber Monday. This requires the foresight to make the necessary marketing investment at the retail display level in order to capture and understand this valuable data.

In today's world of multi-channel purchasing options, in-store sales lift is no longer an efficient way to track a return on investment for in-store marketing programs, such as displays. With the number of people who shop online increasing,

many people visit retailers to vet a potential purchase in-person, before ordering it off the internet. This is what makes the need to track display engagement an important part of the overall marketing strategy and provides the data that will lead to far better marketing decisions.

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### **About Data Display Systems, LLC:**

Founded in 1968, Data Display Systems, LLC maintains manufacturing and engineering teams at our headquarters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. We engineer and deliver custom video, audio, lighting, and interactive solutions for companies who want to captivate and engage customers. Our world-class engineers and programmers build systems from the most comprehensive portfolio in the industry, catering to every client's specific audience. Our entire company is built around the needs of our clients. At our core, we believe that well-established personal relationships are just as important as well-engineered technology. Our knowledge and experience means reliable, flawless performance for all your point-of-purchase display needs. Visit us at [www.dd-usa.com](http://www.dd-usa.com).





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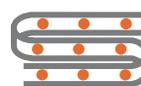
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