

Is your **Wallet** Ready for the Biggest **Sale** of the Year?



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Preface

We all thought to ourselves that by Christmas, things will become normal. And we will be celebrating life like we used to do. But as COVID-19 continues to haunt us in ways that cannot be defined any longer – we have accepted this “new normal” as the order of the day. That includes the way we celebrated Christmas, Thanksgiving and New Year.

Both the online and high-street stores will be offering huge and lucrative discounts. Remember the days when we used to pile up our shopping baskets and found out ways to beat the long queue at the billing counter? The queue may shorten this year as only 39% of Brits are planning to splurge on Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

With the biggest sale of the year only a few weeks away, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has implemented Lockdown #2. The new lockdown restrictions will end on 2 December 2020, right after the Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales are over. Does that leave us to satisfy our shopping cravings by online shopping? How will we support our local businesses that are still up and running in brick-and-mortar shops? Cyber Monday is all about online shopping and the UK has witnessed an inclination towards this trend. However, with jobs on furlough and people living with wage cuts, are we ready to embrace the sale? If you are having a major FOMO right now, LoanTube is here to help you shop without splurging. Shop till you drop? NO. Shop with no regrets later on.

We have specially written this eBook to help you find ways to deal with your cravings for shopping and how you can protect yourself from scams that are increasing prominently.

Why should you shop on Black Friday & Cyber Monday?



Shopping on Black Friday & Cyber Monday: Is it Worth It?

Deals, deals, and DEALS – that’s the biggest reason why we rush towards retail stores and start browsing through thousands of products. In 2019, the average spend of a Brit was £251.20 and the total spend reached a whopping £5,555,089,845. As Black Friday falls right after Thanksgiving, with Christmas only months away – we start planning all our gifts on these particular days to grab the best possible deals.

But is it really worth shopping on Black Friday and Cyber Monday? Will you miss out on the major happenings if you do not shell out some pounds out of your pocket? Let us understand this in a clearer manner.

Here are **5 reasons** why shopping on Black Friday and Cyber Monday is worth it:

1. Save money

Almost all the retail stores and online stores offer huge discounts on every product on their shelves. So, if you wanted to buy a toaster in the month of October at £25, there are chances that you can get it for £11 on these special sale days. As COVID-19 is already hitting our pockets, we cannot indulge in mindless spending. The future is already uncertain and the economy is changing. Shop and save as much as possible.

2. Tradition

It’s an annual tradition that we keep up with. The shopping expeditions are undoubtedly fun and when we hop on with our loved ones – we create timeless memories. Running through the shopping aisles and finding out things on heavy discounts that we laid eyes on months back are some of the things we loved as a kid. And that love for creating memories and having fun also developed when we became old.

3. Festive Vibes

Both Black Friday and Cyber Monday bring in the fresh breeze of festive vibes. The music, the food, people on the streets and even the shopkeepers share the same sense of excitement. It does invoke a sense of happiness and exuberance in adults and kids alike. Even if you don’t want to go out in the cold, given the ongoing conditions, you may be able to enjoy only discounts on some of your favourite brands. Go grab ‘em!

4. Unwind with Friends and Family

These sales are the ultimate way for you and your friends to catch up over shopping. Post lunch shopping at Oxford Street? Count me in please! These sales can be a great way for you to ease the stress of everyday life with your friends or family. After all, retail therapy is known to be a great stress buster. The added advantage of heavily discounted rates makes things even better.

5. COVID-19 friendly shopping

Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales have something in store for all of us. Whether it’s online or offline shopping, you will certainly find amazing deals on both. If you don’t want to stand in a long queue fighting hordes of shoppers for a chance to shop around, you can find the same deals online. Moreover, online deals roll out sooner than the offline ones. So there’s a better chance for you to shop from your go-to brand, online. So you avert the risk of exposure while bagging great discounts. It’s a win-win!

The hardest part is to decide whether you should bag a deal on Black Friday or Cyber Monday. While some like staying in their comfy pyjamas at home and prefer Cyber Monday, some prefer the thrill and excitement of braving the cold to shop Black Friday deals. But the crux of the matter is that regardless of which sale you choose, you're guaranteed to save money off the original price of all the items you've been eying.

You may, however, end up spending more than what you planned, owing to the buying frenzy on these sales. Thus, maintaining and adhering to a strict budget, curated specially for the sale season is a great step to avoid overspending. The next section of this eBook sheds some light upon creating a budget to help you embrace the biggest sale of the year with open arms!



5 ways to plan your **Budget** for the sale



5 Steps to plan your budget for the sale

As we approach the holiday season, we're surrounded by advertisements, hoardings and emails for Black Friday and Cyber Monday promotions. All the buzz around these sales makes you feel as if it's never too soon to start saving money to splurge on the big days. For some, it's literally the biggest shopping bonanza of the year and it's all they save for!

However, a fool and his money are soon parted. Don't let the media hype around Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales blindside you. These sales can be a great opportunity to save some extra bucks on items of need. But if used carelessly, such expenses can burn a hole in your pocket. The ongoing employment situation owing to COVID-19 illustrates why you need to plan before you splurge.

Gone are the days when Black Friday was only limited to the Friday after Thanksgiving. Retailers are now well aware of the shopping tendencies of a buyer. They know how pumped shoppers are for this shopping extravaganza. So stores deploy loud and flashy marketing campaigns to lure even the thriftiest of spenders into superfluous spending.

Be a smart shopper and use this opportunity for what it is. This is a great chance to save money on essential items that you would anyway buy otherwise. All of us are pro deal-grabbers. Who doesn't love a good sale? What's important is how you approach it. Irrespective of what you invest in, you ought to go with a plan.

In this section, we'll learn 5 Steps to plan for the biggest sales of the year- Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

1. Create a shopping list

Stay ahead by planning your Black Friday purchases beforehand. The first and foremost step is to research the items that you want to purchase. The idea is to make separate shopping lists - one for essential and non essential items for yourself, and the second one for gifts for the upcoming holidays.

Shopping List 1: The first list should contain two columns. The first column will contain a list of **essential items** that you're already planning on buying. The second column will basically act like a wishlist. This column will contain a list of **non-essential** items that you wish to buy.

Shopping List 2: The second list covers forthcoming holidays and events. This list will include two columns - number of people you need to purchase gifts for and the number and type of gifts that you're planning to buy. Perhaps add your Christmas gift list, gifts for upcoming birthdays or a wedding gift, here.

2. Review your list

Review your shopping lists and estimate the cost of each item. Run a quick check on your browser to get an idea of what this item would cost. Most stores roll out discounted prices days before the sale. If you're unable to find your item online, just jot down a rough estimate.

3. Do some number crunching

Now that you've got a price tag for each of the items in your list, sum up the three columns, that is, add the cost of each item in the respective lists to determine the total cost. You will have three cumulatives - total cost of essential items, non-essential items and gifts.

4. Check your affordability

Compare the total costs with the amount of money that you've set aside for the sales. Even if you extend the budget for your shopping spree, you need to ensure that the crunch won't affect your monthly budget. You cannot compromise on the essentials, so weigh your options carefully. A good way to do this is by reviewing your expenditure for the month and then see how much you're left with.

5. Allocate money for unplanned expenses

All of us have the tendency to get caught up in the heat of the moment and indulge in impulsive purchases. So it's a good idea to allocate some money from your budget to unplanned expenditures. You can even choose a small amount of money that works for you, perhaps £50.

Although the idea of an impulse spending pot is to keep you motivated to adhere to your budget. Control your temptation of tapping into the impulse spending pot. If you do end up buying an unplanned item, ensure that you stay within your budget. The purpose of adding this extra spending pot in your budget is to use it as a financial cushion, just in case you find a firecracker deal that is simply unavoidable.

Black Friday and Cyber Monday deals can break the bank if you buy everything without giving things a second thought. To make the optimum use of these sales and actually save some money, you must fight the battle with a plan. Prioritize your purchases and check if the deals are really worth it. Waiting outside stores on a chilly morning may be an exhilarating experience, but it's pointless if the deals aren't worth the hype.

Moreover, seeing people shop around without a care can be intimidating. The fact of the matter is that we're all walking differing walks of life and so, your spending capability may or may not match with another person. Whatever may be the case, do your best to spend within your limits for he who buys what he does not need, steals from himself.

In the upcoming section of this eBook, we'll learn more about how much we should be spending on Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales, along with some facts and figures.



**How much should
you spend on the **Sales**?**



How much should you spend on the sales?

From sneaking into queues to early morning tussles over discounted MacBooks, iPhones, TVs and games, we've all been there and done that. The Black Friday trend marks the beginning of the holiday season across the globe. Black Friday has maintained steady growth in the UK since 2010. Despite the pandemic, people are set to splurge on the Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales.

We're in the midst of a global health and economic crisis. While some people are looking forward to enjoying the sales, 41% of the people are sceptical about the sales. However, the cynicism of some didn't deter the others from enjoying the shopping spree. There was a spike in spending per purchase in the UK last year, according to a report by Barclaycard.

The anticipations for this year are no different. While shoppers are pumped to avail the lucrative discounts, they aren't looking forward to experiencing in-store shopping this year. With the COVID-19 restrictions in place, 2020's Black Friday will most likely see a tilt towards online shopping.

“We've Moved on From Black Friday”, *Claims UK*

A research revealed that 66.5% of Brits plan to shop for the holiday season, online. Merely 5.8% of Britons intend to step out of their homes to shop the Black Friday deals. This figure, recorded as 8.5% last year, plummeted down by 2.7%. So the fact that the UK is 'over' Black Friday and Cyber Monday, are merely claims. The data states otherwise.

As per the expert forecast, Black Friday and Cyber Monday may even course the month of November. The crux of the matter is, however, how much are shoppers willing to spend? A poll by Finder revealed that whilst the number of people likely to shop the sales has reduced to 20.3 Million from the 22.1 Million recorded last year, Brits are planning to spend an estimate of £6 Billion, up from the £5.6 Billion last year. This rounds off to an average spending of £296 as opposed to £251 per shopper, last year.

What Will We Spend on?

Black Friday sales have, as per trend, been all about tech and electronic gadgets. This year too, 53% of the UK shoppers are planning to splurge on electronic and tech gadgets. The next most popular category that 29% of the shoppers are pumped to invest in, is fashion. Black Friday and Cyber Monday are primal for festive splurging. Even though COVID-19 safety guidelines urge people to refrain from large family gatherings, 25% of Britons are planning to spend on Christmas stocking fillers this year.

Here's a list of stores offering you great bargains this holiday season:

Amazon: The online retail giant is home to a large variety of products. You possibly find anything and everything on Amazon. Prices have slashed across all departments ever since the sales began.

Aldi: Aldi doesn't only have great deals on groceries, but also hosts a variety of DIY products, homeware and toys.

Argos: Shop great deals on homeware and electronic gadgets at Argos.

Asda: Asda houses a range of homeware and electronic products. Plus, it's brand George has exclusive discounts on clothes for adults and children alike.

Boohoo: Boohoo has gained popularity in the UK for it's contemporary fashion and association with celebrities.

Currys PC World: Currys is the UK's largest electronics and tech retailer. They offer lucrative discounts on Black Friday and Cyber Monday every year.

Dune: Dune houses a wide range of fashion footwear - from shoes, heels, boots and sandals.

Game: Game is a haven for gamers looking to buy consoles and action-packed games.

Halfords: Bikes have gained popularity in 2020. If you too are looking for this switch, look for deals at Halfords.

House of Fraser: This store hosts a variety of brands in fashion, homeware and electronics. There's a fair chance you might get heavy discounts in these departments.

John Lewis: John Lewis is known for its sophisticated, high-street fashion range. Look for discounts on their winter collection.

Littlewoods: Buy products from premium brands on sales at Littlewoods.

Selfridges: The sales at Selfridges offer you a chance to add luxury brands to your wardrobe.

Superdrug: Bag a deal on high street beauty brands and cupboard essentials at Superdrugs.

The Body Shop: Avail beauty deals at this high street favourite and pamper yourself this holiday season.

All you need to do is ensure that you have your shopping list ready, along with a budget. It's easy to get sidetracked when you see such alluring offers. The key is to stick to your budget and not indulge in unnecessary spending.



Shop Without Splurging
on Black Friday &
Cyber Monday



15 Tips for Shopping on Black Friday & Cyber Monday

Black Friday and Cyber Monday are no longer just a US tradition. It is now a global phenomenon and is bigger than ever in the UK. The sales season is now upon us, with Black Friday falling on 27th November and Cyber Monday falling on 30th November. It is often easy to be overwhelmed by the number of deals and offers that are thrown our way during this time of the year. The shopping season is a lucrative period for shoppers, retailers and equally for cybercriminals. Right before a few weeks, your mailbox will be flooded with emails from every possible retailer. Everyone will try to pitch in their discounted items at the sale. While browsing through these emails, it is a possibility that you may come across bogus shopping websites. There is a chance that you will be contacted by online scammers and fraudsters. Shoppers often complain about how the website looked completely legit but their credit card information was compromised.

To cut through some noise, we have collated our top 15 tips for Black Friday and Cyber Monday to ensure you make the most of it.

1. Preparation is the key

Black Friday and Cyber Monday only come around once a year, so it is vital you are fully prepared before the big day. This means studying the adverts through the week, making lists of shops you wish to explore and signing up all to all the newsletters to keep up to date with offers.

There will be thousands of others trying to get the deals you are after. Being prepared can mean you get ahead of them in the sales race.

2. Create a wishlist

Many websites, including Amazon, allow you to set up a wishlist to keep track of all of the items you wish to buy. This doesn't necessarily have to be retailer-specific – it just gives you an idea of what you are looking to buy, and can remind you in the mad rush when Black Friday comes around.

Having a list to hand is also particularly important when you get swept away with thousands of deals on products you don't really want or need. It keeps your shopping focussed.

3. Start early, finish late

In recent times, Black Friday and Cyber Monday have transformed into a week-long spectacle. Retailers will start early with their deals and savings, while online stores may continue their savings throughout the month. In fact, some retailers have already begun their sales!

To ensure you make the most of the best deals (which are likely to be snapped up the quickest), you will need to be aware of the opening times of certain stores and when deals go live online. A little research goes a long way in this regard.

4. Look at the price, not the saving

This is a point that is often overlooked. Just because an item is half priced doesn't mean it is necessarily offering

you a good value. Offers which are portrayed as “Was £200, Now £100” sometimes exaggerate the discount, as the original £200 price tag was far too pricey.

Do a little digging across a few different retailers to find out what the true price of the product is. Only then can you be sure that the discount is worthwhile.

5. Research your wishlist

A discounted poor product is still a poor product. Ensure you have done your research on the items you are looking to purchase and read as many reviews as you can. Sales season can often see shoppers fighting over products that are not up to scratch in the first place.

This also applies to whether the product you are about to buy is actually compatible. Do you have an Android phone but are about to buy an accessory that only works with Apple devices? Time to put your thinking cap on.

6. Prepare your online accounts

If you are rushing to make use of that perfect deal, the last thing you need is a “Sign In” page where you have forgotten your password.

Taking ten minutes to sign up to many of the main online retailers (and remember any forgotten passwords) can save you a lot of precious time when you are rushing to make the most of the deals.

7. Use an updated browser

If you are using an outdated version of the web browser, it is more likely to be compromised in terms of security vulnerabilities. Any personal information that you share using an outdated browser may be stolen by cybercriminals. According to Action Fraud (UK’s national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime), 16,532 people fell victim to cybercriminals while shopping online during the nationwide lockdown.

Also, using an outdated web browser can trap you as a “middle man”. Without your permission and knowledge, thousands of emails could be sent to people – which will be a legal concern for you later on.

8. Check for HTTPS

Whenever you are visiting a website, ensure that the web address contains “HTTPS” and not “HTTP”. The “S” in the web address indicates that the website is secure and you can safely input your personal information. All the information that you provide will be encoded – that means it will not be visible to the potential hackers who might steal it. If a website doesn’t have an “S”, then the website is not encrypted. Entering your personal information may jeopardize your financial security.

Also, check for the “padlock” symbol. This symbol indicates that any communication between the browser and the server is encrypted. In short, the websites that you use must SSL protocols in place to avoid any possibility of scams.

9. Read the privacy policy

Every website or eCommerce website has its privacy policy, which is open for the visitors. Ensure that you read the privacy policy before hopping on to browsing the endless items available for sale. Going through the privacy policy will help you understand how your personal data can/will be used by the web owner.

You will get an idea of what personal information is collected and who can access the data that you provide.

10. Create strong passwords

To become less vulnerable to identity thefts, create strong passwords. When you are given an option to create passwords, you may find the meter that tells you how strong is the password that you have just entered.

Rather than using a password that has only numbers or say a combination of numbers and letters – choose an alphanumeric password. Keep updating your passwords regularly and make it a habit of not using the same password for multiple websites.

11. Identify phishing emails

The holiday season brings in a lot of emails. Advertisers and retailers keep on sending numerous emails promoting their store or products. Some emails may contain links that could send you off to suspicious websites.

Identify the phishing emails. Such emails may contain many grammatical or typographical errors. Some fraudsters may go one step ahead by asking you to “verify” your confidential information by clicking on a link. Do not respond to such emails and report it to Action Fraud immediately if you think it’s a scam.

12. Be social

Many hopeful shoppers will be scouring the internet looking for the perfect offers, all the while forgetting to check social media. Companies use social media to promote certain deals that won’t be present on their website.

Retailers will also often reward customers who like, follow or share their posts. Make sure you follow all of your favourite shops online to keep up to date with their deals.

13. Avoid scams

Unfortunately, Black Friday and Cyber Monday is a good time of year for fraudsters and scammers to rear their ugly heads. With the sheer amount of sales, deals and adverts flooding our eyes, fraudsters can slip through the net and take advantage of the rush.

The advice from us is simple – use common sense. Never give out any credit card details if you are suspicious, and don’t give away login or password details. Be extra vigilant in relation to any unsolicited emails and always double-check before being drawn into a “too good to be true” deal.

14. Check the return policy

Buyer’s remorse is not a myth and Black Friday can leave you often feeling a sense of regret about spending money on something you just didn’t need. Make sure you ask every shop about their return policy.

This also includes returns for any faulty items, clothes that don’t fit or gifts which you need to return. Ask about how many “return days” you have and whether they refund the item or whether they offer in-store credit. Keep all receipts and always ask for a gift receipt if it is a gift.

15. Stick to your budget

This is a tip which is quite important to us here at LoanTube. It sounds like a simple task, but so many people overspend during this time of year and it is easy to see why when Black Friday and Cyber Monday are designed to get you to spend money on things you weren’t intending to buy.

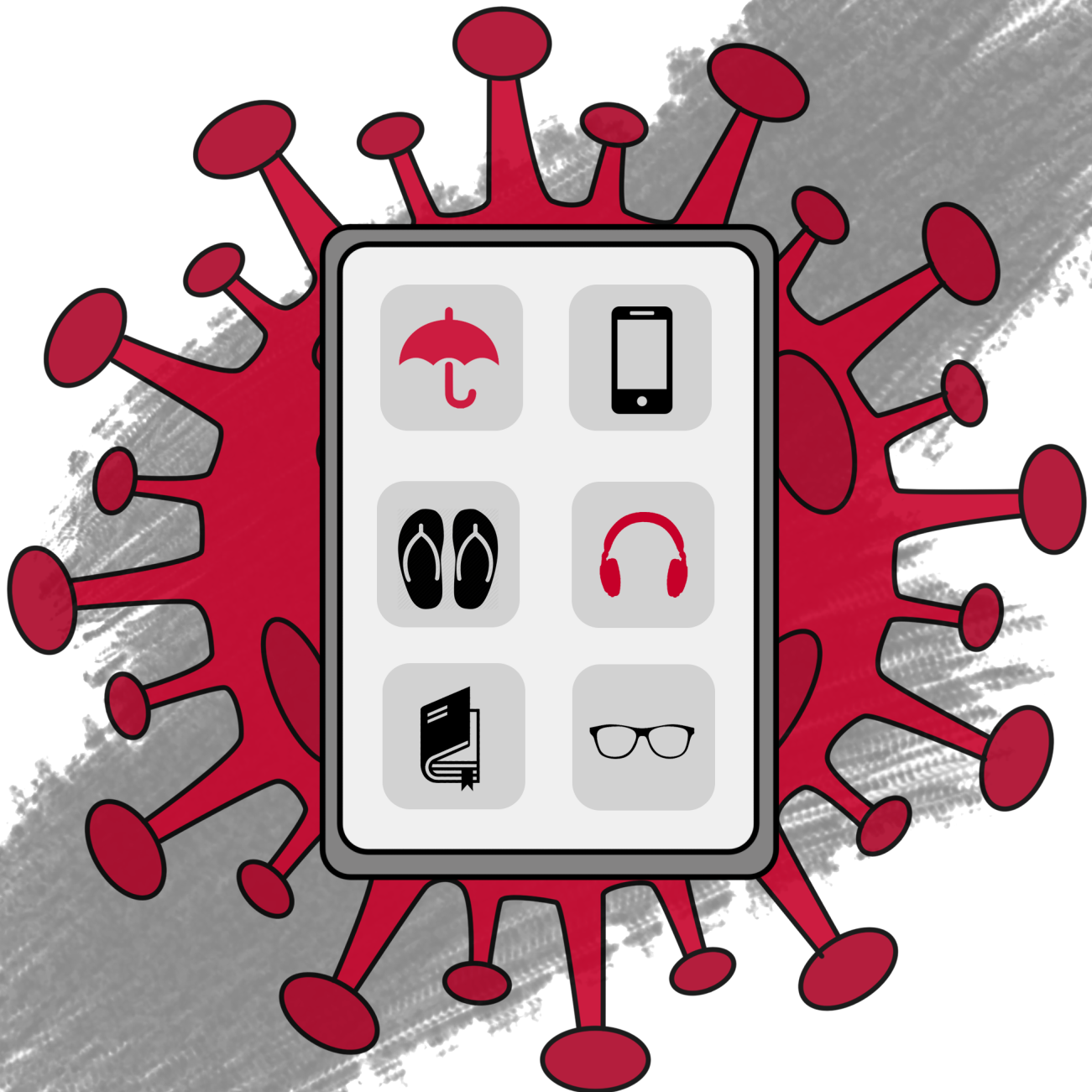
There will, of course, be opportunities to get brilliant savings, but don’t overdo it. Don’t fall into the trap of buying things you didn’t want and couldn’t afford. Set a budget and make sure you stick to it. Before you buy the product, ask yourself “do I really need it?”.

It is also worth noting for next year’s Black Friday – setting aside a little bit of money each week for big sales like

this can mean you are better prepared to spend a little more in the sales, instead of splurging all of your money in one go.



COVID-19 & Shopping Season



The COVID Effect on Black Friday & Cyber Monday

In recent years, Black Friday is losing its clout as businesses are shifting the way they used to operate. COVID-19 is a real game changer for the retailers. Our work and home life have merged almost since the beginning of the year. Although many high street shops are taking enough sanitisation measures, people may still prefer to sit at home and grab the deals at their comfort. Many companies are still figuring out how they can manage the Black Friday sale amidst the pandemic. The in-store retailers are the ones who are facing the major challenges. Retailers are re-strategising their Black Friday sale while promoting people to buy online on Cyber Monday.

So, does that mean Black Friday is over? Will Black Friday 2020 be the same as it was years ago? Or will there be changes that we may not adopt so soon? All the brick-and-mortar retailers will have to follow government rules and laws surrounding COVID-19. The bargain hunters may have to sit at home and shop from home this season. The second lockdown has started from November 5 and will continue till December 2. The Cabinet Minister has recently announced that the lockdown may extend if the need arises.

Non-essential shops, clubs, pubs, bars have already been closed. COVID-19 may completely change the face of Black Friday. A lot of stores have announced their plans to extend their holiday sales over weeks. Famous eCommerce giants such as Amazon, John Lewis, Argos, Currys PC World have introduced a wide variety of offers that will be active till Cyber Monday.

Stores that may remain open in the rest of the area in the UK will have proper coronavirus-related safety concerns in place to safeguard the health of the customers visiting them. Safe distancing practice will also be crucial to stop the spread and hence, it may take a lot of time for you to visit the store, buy the things you want, pay the bill and exit. Shops have also introduced policies that you can only touch the things that you intend to buy. If you are planning to buy some clothes, then you will not have the option to try them out before buying. You can buy clothes, try them at home, and return them if you do not want to keep them.

All these things may lead people to prefer staying back at home. Holiday shopping has become more virtual than ever in 2020, given the pandemic. As retailers will be receiving huge orders, you can expect a delay in delivery.

It's difficult to pin down the reason for people's fading inclination towards Black Friday. Although COVID-19 is a major contributor to this disinclination, it's not the only year. The concept of Black Friday has lost its charm over the last few years. With more and more retailers resorting to the online counterparts, with the same lucrative discounts, offline shopping may soon become outdated.

Around 64% of the consumers out of 1500, stated they are less likely to shop offline on Black Friday this time, as opposed to the past few years. Retailers are struggling to cope up with the ambiguity of the situation due the pandemic and a potential recession. They've been offering flashy deals and lucrative discounts to consumers since October, to encourage them to shop early. Experts anticipate that shoppers may not spend as much on gifts this season since they might skip family gatherings during the festive season. Moreover, people will be spending money more judiciously, now than ever, owing to the wage cuts and unemployment because of COVID-19. Additionally, COVID-19 had taken over all media. Since COVID-19 updates drive a busier news cycle, it could distract consumers and limit the time they spend on shopping. So by preponing the sale, retailers aim to rouse the

consumer's appetite, prepare their inventory and supply chain and align their in-store shopping strategy with a COVID-19 friendly one.



Epilogue

The holiday season of 2020 is staged amidst a pandemic-driven consumer economy. As a consequence, Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales will witness an unprecedented shift to ecommerce. Retailers are preparing themselves for this shift with better supply chain management, inventory management and online practices to cater to the heavy traffic. Your favourite brands might come up with better discounts online, as opposed to the offers available in stores.

Some of us who have a traditional sentiment attached to these sales might prefer the big ol' brick and mortar stores to do our holiday shopping. Regardless of where you choose to shop and what you buy, it is imperative that you organize your shopping. Because shopping is fun, but organized shopping is cheap and cheerful. Make a shopping list, set a budget and adhere to the costs allocated to each item. The reason spending money makes us happy is because it instills a sense of being in control. But sometimes, we get pressured into buying something we don't really need. Different people have different financial situations and capabilities. You may not know theirs, but you're well aware of yours. Don't pressure buy your way into overspending.

While we encourage you to spend money carefully, you cannot put a price on your family's happiness. LoanTube is here to help!

Visit us to compare real rate loans from multiple lenders to find your ideal loan, this Christmas.

