

Weak Economy Affecting 'Black Friday' Shopping

Consumers Struggling To Refuse Deep Discounts; Retailers Worried About Lower Profits

NEW YORK (CBS)—Gift cards could be the gift choice for many of the nearly 130 million people expected to shop on Black Friday and beyond.

That number is down from past years, but is still a big number that has some hopeful for this holiday season.

Black Friday began with a bang, but retailers worry that it could end with a whimper.

The weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas usually generate between 30 and 40 percent of stores' annual revenue.

This year, with spending down and unemployment up, the economic climate is not looking good for holiday shopping.

"It's terrible. Normally, retailers see a three to five percent increase," retail expert Ivan Friedman said. "Because sales have been so poor in all of October, we think it will be horrible."

The tactic that retailers are using to try to snap customers out of their funk is deep discounts—on almost everything.

At malls in New Jersey, and across the country, it's having an impact.

Courtney Euler was trying to hold back, but deals at Victoria's Secret were too good to refuse.

"If you spent over \$60, you got a bag full of \$75 worth of beauty products and stuff," Euler said. "It was so cool. I got it."

"I got some iPods for my daughters," holiday shopper Ernesto Tan said. "The iPod was like an \$11 discount each, so I got \$22 off two iPods."

At Aeropostale, everything in the store was 50 percent off. Customers who spent \$100 got a free teddy bear as well.

So-called "doorbuster" deals get shoppers in the store, but they also make it harder for stores to turn a profit.

Lenny Perez went shopping for an amazing deal on a flat screen TV, and that's all he bought.

"That's it, that's it," Perez said. "[With] this recession, it's not a good time to shop."

Many share Perez's sentiments on the economic outlook, an opinion that stores and malls are desperately trying to change.

The sister companion to Black Friday is Cyber Monday, when online holiday shopping increases. Experts expect a slight spike this year, as buyers seek to comparison-shop and save money on gas.

But New York's Customer Protection Board warns you to be careful with personal information when shopping online.