

Black Friday shopping strategies

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GET THE MOST OUT OF BLACK FRIDAY

To find the best deals on Black Friday, you have to have a game plan; you can't just stroll into the store at noon and expect to find what you want. Follow these Black Friday tips and strategies to get the best bargains and reduce your holiday shopping stress.

Carry a shopping list

Spend some time researching and create a detailed shopping list. When you get to the stores, stick to it. "Know exactly what you want. The best Black Friday deals are in very limited supply, which is why you should never enter a store and just be window shopping," says **Service Strategist John Tschohl, author of *The Customer is Boss***. "Have a detailed list of everything you want to get. To save valuable time, make sure you know ahead of time the differences in models, the need for any add-ons or accessories, and a backup store if your first stop runs out."

Sort by category

Sort your list by category according to the areas of the store. When shopping at big-box and department stores, your best bet is to go with two friends. One of you heads to the back of the store, one takes the middle section, and one remains near the front. This way, you won't miss out on the Black Friday deals in electronics because you are caught up in kids' clothing.

Hire someone else to camp out

Discounted electronics and other items are in very limited quantities on Black Friday, so you have to be near the front of the line. If you don't want to spend the night on the cold, freezing sidewalk, hire a trustworthy teen from your neighborhood to wait in line for you. Give her \$50, a Thermos with a hot drink or soup, and a blanket; tell her to bring a book (or her iPod). While she holds position in the line, you can catch some sleep and arrive right before the store actually opens.

Don't give in to temptation

If you don't find what you're looking for on Black Friday, don't be tempted to buy whatever is on sale. This is how you end up overspending on junk you don't really want or need. "If you don't get the deals you want on Black Friday, wait," says Tschohl. "Retailers usually run special sales the first two weeks of December. Prices generally go up closer to Christmas for those who wait until the last minute. If you're eyeing something for yourself, many retailers also run deeply discounted after-Christmas sales to reduce their inventories."