

Cyber Week Drives Bump in US Online Holiday Sales



US online spending strengthened to \$270 billion for the recent holiday period as Cyber Week discounts prompted consumers to open their wallets, according to data Salesforce released on Monday.

E-commerce sales for November and December were 5% higher than the \$257 billion Salesforce reported a year ago for the equivalent period of 2021. Last-minute orders at stores offering the buy online, pick up in store (BOPIS) option also drove sales; nearly one in five purchases worldwide were via this omni-channel method. Global online spending was flat compared to a year ago, at \$1.14 trillion, the customer-relationship platform and data provider added.

However, the rate of returns also increased. A total of 1.39 billion purchases were brought back, accounting for 13% of total sales over the two-month season, Salesforce explained. That figure is 63% higher than in the same period of 2021. Returns spiked in the six days following Christmas, with 16% of orders returned that week — a gain of 5% year on year.

“Retailers closed out the 2022 holiday season with stronger online sales growth than expected — driven in large part by US demand, steeper discounts on peak days, and BOPIS options,” said Rob Garf, vice president and general manager of retail at Salesforce. “Staggering return numbers show that consumers are still cautious amid economic uncertainty, however.”

Retailers only offered “lackluster” deals early in the shopping season, Salesforce noted. Discounts later in the period were better, leading to a 21% average reduction compared to 19% in 2021. Top discount categories included beauty, skin care and makeup, followed by apparel and handbags.

Image: Online shopping. (Shutterstock)