



in|market insights

Mapping the Holiday Shopping Season

Overview

When it comes to holiday shopping, Black Friday gets all the buzz. But the peak shopping season lasts for much longer than a single day -- with heavy retail traffic spikes and valleys occurring across all retail categories throughout November and December.

At inMarket, we use proprietary background shopper location data to help the leading retailers and brands understand how consumers shop in the physical world, and to influence behavior to drive ROI. In this holiday report, we're using first-party location data from 50 million monthly smartphone owners to map the entire holiday season. We've surfaced key opportunities for brands throughout November and December that normally go unnoticed.

Through the lens of our massive historical data sets, we've identified the most important shopping dates based on heaviest foot traffic in each retail category. From these insights, many of inMarket's partner brands are opening up conversations that engage shoppers in store at these moments of truth.

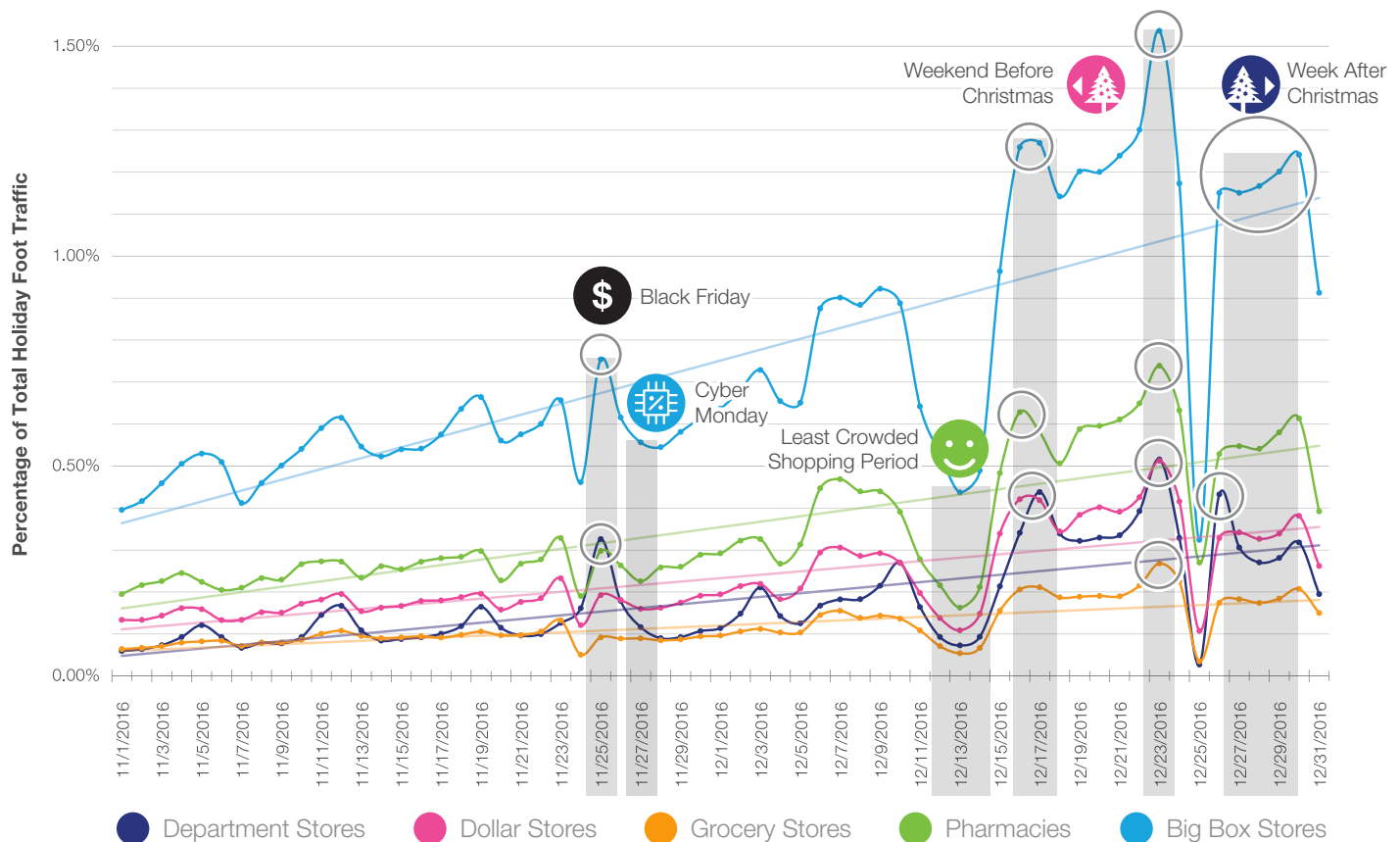


Holiday Foot Traffic at Retail: Visualized

Here's a look at store visit patterns from the 2016 holiday season, across the Department, Dollar, Grocery, Pharmacy and Big Box categories:

2016 U.S. Holiday Shopping Trip Volume by Category

Based on inMarket Location Data from 50 Million Verified Consumers



💰 Black Friday, for all its campouts, doorbusters, and fully loaded shopping carts, isn't when the most Americans are out shopping. While there is a clear spike for big box retailers and department stores, it's not significant for the grocery channel. Savvy grocery brands should heavy up on marketing to reach houses stuffed with family and home meals who shopped grocery a lot the week up until Christmas.

🎄 In the dollar store category, all of the busiest days occur within the month of December. For brands specifically looking to drive sales in the dollar chains, the two Saturdays leading up to Christmas present the clearest foot traffic spike for the category and could lead to highest returns on investment -- and there is still time to launch mobile programs that drive sales this quarter.



Heavy consumer foot traffic does not end after Christmas. For big box and department stores, December 26 offers a huge opportunity to reach shoppers who are back for more. This spike is particularly pronounced in the department store category, as shoppers rush out to return itchy sweaters and use gift cards from stockings. Contrarily, the December 26th spike does not apply to dollar, grocery or pharmacy stores, perhaps because they make for less exciting gift cards and typically sell perishables that are not returned.

As consumers rely on their mobile devices more than ever inside stores, a natural window is created for brand marketers to engage and influence them precisely during the moments of heightened receptivity that occur near the point-of-purchase. Specialized, hyper-relevant creative (for example, about returning an unwanted gift) delivered proactively inside a store via mobile could lead to huge ROI for savvy brands.



Cyber Monday (November 27) is a slow day for department and big box stores, while remaining relatively flat for grocery and pharmacy. This demonstrates just how powerful a force e-commerce is becoming on those categories -- which unlike grocery and pharmacy, aren't part of a consumer's weekly routine. The onus is on department and big box stores to work harder at attracting people into the store -- through e-commerce style innovations like in-store pickup, price matching and predictive targeting.



December 12-14th was the calm "eye of the storm" during the week when early birds have shopped, but procrastinators are not in full swing. It's a great time for shoppers looking better parking spaces and elbow room, this is the optimal shopping window. From a brand perspective, one smart move would be scale back media blitzes during the trough. Predictive visit technology like inMarket's Preceptivity, can focus on shoppers most likely to visit the store within the next 48 hours.