



Veni, Vidi, Visa! High hopes for holiday shoppers

December 14, 2010 - Shopping Centers

The holiday shoppers are back in force, at least if Black Friday numbers are an accurate indicator for the rest of the season. Some 212 million customers shopped stores and websites over the holiday weekend, up from 195 million last year, says the National Retail Federation. Those actually making purchases rose 4% over 2009, says The NPD Group, and purchases per person rose some 6.4%, NRF adds. Even more important, consumers are buying for someone they've ignored the past two years-themselves. Self-gifting has risen, NRF says, as has the percentage of shoppers who planned to visit department stores: 52% of those surveyed said they would shop at department stores, up from 49.4% last year. Discounters, however, lost ground, with 40.3% of respondents say they shopped there, vs. 43.2% last year. Cyber Monday was even more successful, with online sales rising 19.4% over last year, according to Coremetrics. Both the number of people shopping and the size of their orders increased.

It's important to remember, however, that Black Friday sales aren't the whole story. "Black Friday" promotions began early in November at many retailers-and some Cyber Monday sales started as Thanksgiving dishes were still being washed! I still expect a much better season than many have predicted, even though predictions have been fairly good. The holiday weekend, while still important to retailers' health overall, is just a major and well-publicized fraction of an extended shopping season that begins shortly after Halloween and ends with gift card redemptions through mid-January. Believe it or not, I know some people who were finished with their shopping by Turkey Day.

For those of us who aren't, finished, however, there are plenty of new retailers in the city. Holiday pop-ups abound: Bryant Park is hosting Lionel Trains' entry at 1095 Sixth Ave. AllSaints' pop-up will be at 415 West 13th St. through the holidays. Brooklyn's Annie's Blue Ribbon General Store will occupy 2408 Broadway this month. Wired's annual holiday pop-up is at the former Tower Records space at 682 Broadway. Gap's latest pop-up concept, collaboration with the Cool Hunting blog, is now at 680 Fifth Ave. Levi's second Premium store can be found at 414 West 14th St. Harry & David fans can find their favorite gift at 155 Fifth Ave. David Lerner's new Sports and Maternity lines are available for the next six months at 1435 Lexington Ave. The Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum's Grand Central Terminal offering has an edited assortment of gifts.

Other stores are opening, too: Space NK's third boutique has debuted at 968 Lexington Ave. Michael Kors' latest store is scheduled to open at 20th St. and Fifth Ave. this spring. Canadian coat maker Mackage has opened its first U.S. boutique at 123 Mercer St. Gap is extending its lease at 120 Fifth Ave. Forever 21's six-month stay at 693 Fifth Ave. (the former Takashimaya) has begun. Nearby, Hollister has opened at 668 Fifth. Comptoir des Cotonniers reportedly has signed for 345 Bleecker St. New Zealand's Icebreaker Touchlab offers outdoor and active apparel in all-natural fabrics at 102 Wooster St.

Downtown, Converse has debuted at 560 Broadway, only its second boutique in the country (the first is in Boston). Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI) will bring its indoor/outdoor gear to 295 Lafayette St. PetSmart has opened at 632 Broadway. MAC Cosmetics will open this month at 351 Bleecker St. Marshall's Shoe Shop has taken two levels at 740 Broadway. E.vil at 666 Broadway has clothing for your inner villain. Jewelry designer Erica Weiner has opened her first boutique at 173 Elizabeth St. The Kardashian sisters' Dash boutique brings a bit of Hollywood to 119 Spring St. By the time this is published, we'll have completed the final ICSC Women's Special Interest Group, a year-end roundtable reception and presentation from Lord & Taylor. I'm both proud of and humbled by the reception this initiative has received, beginning with our first session at RECon in Las Vegas and continuing through regional meetings in Boston, Orlando, San Diego, Chicago and Atlanta. And I'm delighted to say that ICSC and I are continuing this program in 2011, and expanding it to new meetings. The next is scheduled for ICSC's Mid-Atlantic Conference and Deal Making, being held February 22 and 23 in National Harbor, MD. More details will be announced in January. The birth and rapid development of this program is just another sign of our continuing recovery. Retail, real estate and New York City are unsinkable-we take our hits, survive and thrive. And next year promises to be even better!
Happy holidays & happy shopping!

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