

'Open on Thanksgiving' not good strategy for retailers, expert says

November 14 2014, by Jacqueline Ghosen



Retailers who hope to get a leg up on the competition by opening on Thanksgiving Day are taking the wrong approach, according to a national expert in retail marketing and strategy in the University at Buffalo School of Management.

A far better strategy for increasing sales (and maintaining high levels of [customer service](#)) is for businesses to make their Black Friday offerings more attractive, says Arun Jain, PhD, Samuel P. Capen Professor of

Marketing Research at the UB School of Management.

"It's a pity that in the richest country in the world, we cannot reserve even a single day for family, and there is a good chance it could backfire with consumer boycotts," he says.

"If retailers wait until Black Friday and offer good incentives, consumers will still come and their shopping lists will still be warm," he says. "And shoppers will be greeted by happy employees who were able to celebrate the holiday with their loved ones instead of being forced to work.

"Happier sales people are more helpful sales people, which leads to higher [sales](#) and a more positive evaluation of the store by consumers."

Malls like the Walden Galleria in Cheektowaga, N.Y., shouldn't pressure their stores to open early, Jain says. Instead, they should "rise above it all" and make a statement about their values. If management is concerned that customers will go to another mall, they are forgetting that the Galleria has no true rivals in the Buffalo Niagara area.

"This is an opportunity for retailers to say what they stand for and that they respect workers, their families and this uniquely American tradition," Jain says.

"It would be more effective for malls to take out a full-page ad announcing their intention to remain closed on Thanksgiving with photos of the employees of their stores."

Provided by University at Buffalo

Citation: 'Open on Thanksgiving' not good strategy for retailers, expert says (2014, November 14) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-11-thanksgiving-good-strategy->

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