

Avoid bait marketing pitfalls, but unearth Black Friday jewels

Fake discounts and bait marketing are some of the pitfalls that South African consumers must be aware of as the countdown to Black Friday (24 November 2023) and Cyber Monday (27 November 2023) has started, while it is essential to conduct meticulous research in unearthing the 'jewels' of discounts of up to 70 %, said Trudie Broekmann, a Cape Town-based attorney specialising in consumer law.



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On Black Friday 2022, SA customers made purchases worth over R3bn. Customer transactions in 2022 increased by almost 19% when compared to the previous year.

Broekmann said some suppliers might be tempted to raise prices for goods in the weeks leading up to Black Friday, and then offer a big discount which just means the price is exactly where it was before. “So don’t be fooled. Use sites like www.pricecheck.co.za to identify the real market price for an item you want to purchase,” she added.

When you list the items you are interested to purchase as well as bulk grocery items, research the best prices available for both lists on-line. “If you know the usual price of an item, you can spot a fake discount. Decide how much you can afford to pay for each item beforehand, taking into account that one can get discounts of up to 70%,” Broekmann added.

Consumers should be unafraid to ask financial institutions for assistance if they have debt. Ask an institution for Black Friday discount. And even if they don't generally do that, ask whether they would offer you 75% off on your debt if you pay it off over the next six months, Broekmann added.



Take advantage of #BlackFriday to make the most of the festive season and Januwoorry

25 Oct 2023



What happens if retailers market certain discounts, but it is sold out very quickly? Broekmann said section 30 of the Consumer Protection Act makes "bait marketing" illegal. That is when suppliers lure consumers into their shops or onto their websites with amazing offers which sells out almost immediately.

"If a retailer has advertised a special, but it is sold out and the retailer did not state beforehand that their stocks are limited at their price and precisely how limited stocks are, consumers can force the retailer to supply the product to you at the advertised price," Broekmann said.

Many retailers already publish their specials in the month leading up to Black Friday. So consumers must keep an eye out for that. Remember that Game offers consumers an additional 10% off if you can find an identical item for a lower price elsewhere in South Africa (see <https://www.game.co.za/cp/price-beat>), said Broekmann.



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Broekmann also warned SA consumers to harness their inner sceptic and to be careful as there is a high incidence of fraud with online transactions, each time you are asked to click in a link, and give out your password or authorise a transaction. Don't take any risks.

Check out websites carefully before making online purchases. Do these websites give an address, email and phone number in South Africa, and do those contact details work? If not, how are you going to contact them to return a defective product or enquire if your delivery doesn't happen?

Google reviews of the supplier first. Try typing in the supplier's name and the word "scam" and see whether any other consumers complain about the supplier, Broekmann added.

Items consumers could consider shopping for during Black Friday and Cyber Monday are Christmas gifts and entertainment items such as sparkling wine and larger cuts of meat, as well as disposable nappies and other items for children.

Other items include bulk groceries, electronic items and back-to-school needs such as clothing and suitcases.

Broekmann added that some financial institutions offer big reductions on debt if consumers pay it off in a lump sum or over six months.

Decide which retailers you want to watch in case they have a good deal on one of your items. It is online; set up an account with a strong, unique password and load those items onto your wish list.

On Black Friday check all the retailers' prices on your wish lists, taking into account delivery and other fees, then decide which items on your list can fit into your budget and purchase them, Broekmann added.

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