



# Black Friday ADVERTISING TRENDS

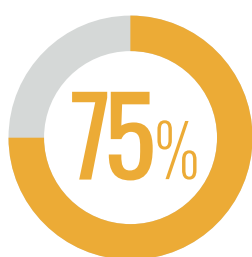
Mspark focuses on the unique needs, desires and media consumption habits of the **rural consumer**. This eBook provides information about our new holiday date alignment, research into rural consumer's Black Friday shopping habits, and data that shows how well direct mail works for this segment of the population.

## BLACK FRIDAY DATE ALIGNMENT

Due to Mspark customer demand and consumer behavior changes, our package will arrive in the mailbox on the Tuesday before Black Friday for the first time in our history.

Why does this matter? It will allow advertisers to arrive in the mailbox just in time to help rural consumers make decisions on where to spend their money.

| NOVEMBER |    |                              |    |    |                            |     |
|----------|----|------------------------------|----|----|----------------------------|-----|
| SUN      | M  | T                            | W  | TH | F                          | SAT |
|          |    |                              |    |    | 1                          | 2   |
| 3        | 4  | 5                            | 6  | 7  | 8                          | 9   |
| 10       | 11 | 12                           | 13 | 14 | 15                         | 16  |
| 17       | 18 | 19                           | 20 | 21 | 22                         | 23  |
| 24       | 25 | 26<br>MSPARK<br>IN HOME DATE | 27 | 28 | 29<br>FREE<br>Black Friday | 30  |



**OF RURAL SHOPPERS CHOOSE A RETAILER  
BASED ON AVAILABLE PROMOTIONS OR SALES**

*Source: Adobe Insights and Analytics*

# 2018 BLACK FRIDAY TRENDS



## THANKSGIVING DAY

Online spending on Thanksgiving 2018 hit **\$3.7 BILLION**, representing 27.9% growth year-over-year, outpacing 2017's 18.3% growth rate. It is the highest growth rate since 2014. One reason is that many merchants **changed their strategy**, for the first time charging the same prices on Thanksgiving Day as they did on Black Friday.



## BLACK FRIDAY

Online sales on Black Friday jumped 23.6% from a year ago, to **\$6.2 BILLION**. More than \$2 billion of these revenues came from smartphones with 33.5% of total sales attributed to mobile, up from 29% last year. Average order value was \$146, an increase of 8.5% over 2017.



## CYBER MONDAY

Cyber Monday was the biggest sales day of the year with online revenues of **\$7.9 BILLION**, an increase of 19.3% over 2017. Mobile transactions soared. Over half of visits — 54.3% — came from mobile devices, a year-over-year increase of 55.6%.

The change of strategy merchants made to offer the same deals both Thanksgiving Day and Black Friday seemed to have worked for rural households with kids – 3.3% more indicated they plan to shop Thanksgiving Day, vs. their urban counterparts.

More rural households with kids planned to shop Cyber Monday – likely contributing to the day's success.

### ► KEY TAKEAWAY:

Rural households with kids are more motivated than their urban counterparts to shop Thanksgiving Day, Black Friday, and Cyber Monday.

## WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DAYS DO YOU PLAN TO SHOP THANKSGIVING WEEKEND?

|                  | Urban Households with Children | Rural Households with Children | % Increase/Decrease |
|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Thanksgiving Day | 27.5%                          | 28.4%                          | 3.3%                |
| Black Friday     | 71.8%                          | 76.6%                          | 6.7%                |
| Saturday         | 40.5%                          | 38.7%                          | -4.4%               |
| Sunday           | 21.6%                          | 17.1%                          | -20.8%              |
| Cyber Monday     | 43.2%                          | 45.9%                          | 6.3%                |

Sources: Adobe Analytics 2018, Prosper Insights & Analytics 2018

# Why

## DO RURAL CONSUMERS SHOP THANKSGIVING WEEKEND?

# 4.2%

more households with kids living in rural areas indicated they would be shopping Thanksgiving weekend.

They were more likely to say that they plan to shop that weekend because the deals were too good to pass up, it's tradition, and something they do as a group with friends and family.

Capitalize on these characteristics in your advertising that reveals the rural consumer's motivation for shopping over the Thanksgiving weekend.



### ► KEY TAKEAWAY:

Rural households with kids are more motivated to shop Thanksgiving weekend than their urban counterparts.

THURSDAY,  
**NOV 28**  
THROUGH MONDAY,  
**DEC 2**

### IS IT LIKELY THAT YOU WILL GO SHOPPING THANKSGIVING WEEKEND EITHER IN STORE OR ONLINE?

|     | Urban Households with Children | Rural Households with Children | % Increase/Decrease |
|-----|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| YES | 50.1%                          | 52.2%                          | 4.2%                |

### WHY DO YOU PLAN TO SHOP OVER THANKSGIVING WEEKEND (STORE OR ONLINE)?

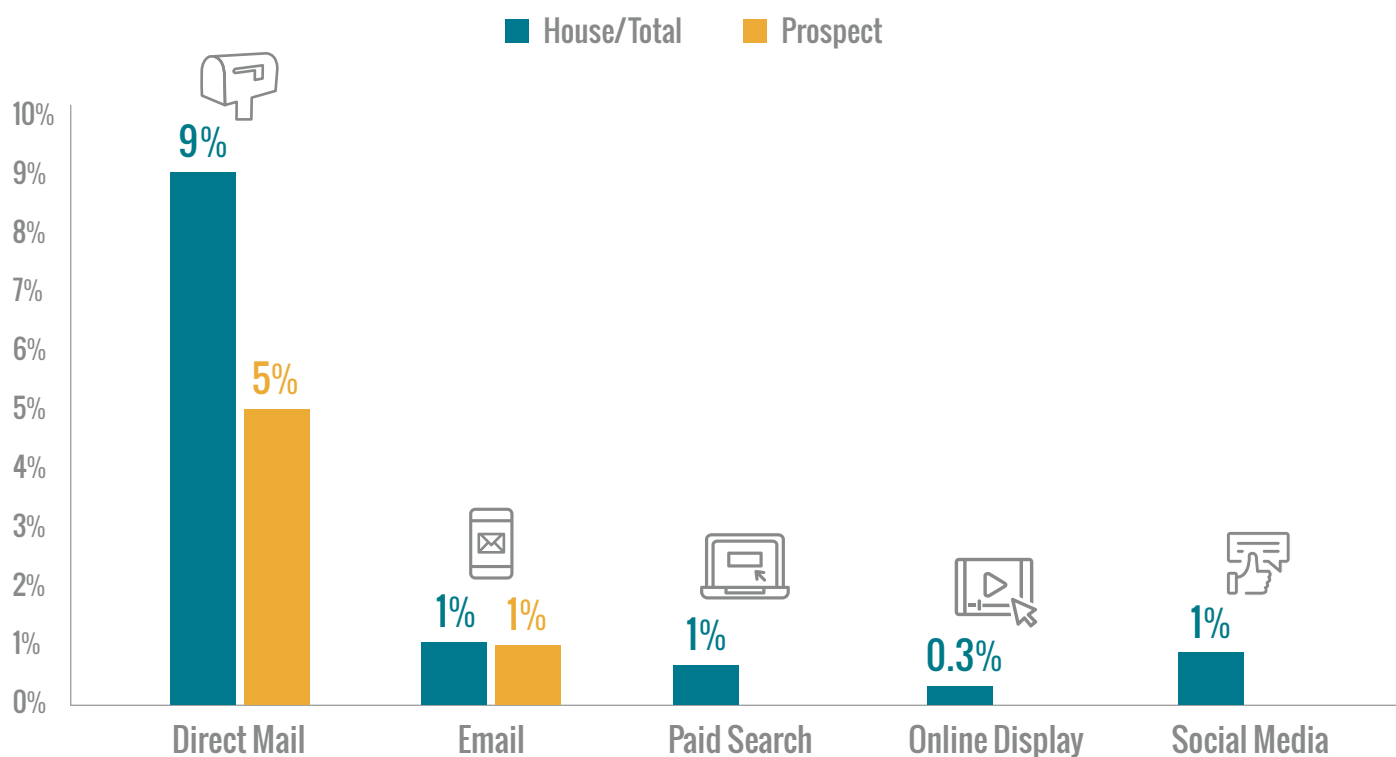
|  | Urban Households with Children | Rural Households with Children | % Increase/Decrease |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| The deals are too good to pass up                              | 61.7%                          | 67.9%                          | 10%                 |
| It's tradition; I shop Thanksgiving weekend all/most years     | 30.0%                          | 34.7%                          | 15.6%               |
| I like to start my holiday shopping over Thanksgiving weekend  | 28.5%                          | 22.2%                          | -22.1%              |
| I like to finish my holiday shopping over Thanksgiving weekend | 15.8%                          | 12.7%                          | -19.6%              |
| It's something to do over the holiday weekend                  | 23.1%                          | 22.2%                          | -3.9%               |
| It's a group activity with friends/family                      | 20.9%                          | 24.6%                          | 17.7%               |
| It's a people watching event                                   | 8.1%                           | 6.2%                           | -23.5%              |
| I wanted to see was the fuss is about                          | 4.6%                           | 3.4%                           | -26.1%              |

Sources: Adobe Analytics 2018



# DIRECT MAIL RESPONSE RATES vs. SELECT DIGITAL MEDIA

## RESPONSE BY SELECTED MEDIA



Source: 2018 DMA Response Rate Report

Direct mail response rates are outperforming many of the popular media chosen by retailers.

This is due to better utilized consumer data and the precision-targeting capabilities of direct mail.

And for rural consumers it has an even bigger impact. Why? They receive far less media exposure than their urban counterparts, which makes them more responsive to the advertising messages they do receive.

► **KEY TAKEAWAY:**  
Direct mail response rates are  
**800% HIGHER**  
than email and paid search.

BLACK FRIDAY

success  
story

## CUSTOMER OBJECTIVE

Provide a direct mail solution that will allow them to stand out from the competition and to engage consumers on Black Friday.

## MSPARK APPROACH

- ✓ Mail the Impact Postcard to targeted carrier routes surrounding the store location with a propensity to purchase furniture
- ✓ Feature attractive offers: **\$99 door buster sofa** (reg. \$499); aggressive discounts store wide

“OUR LINES WERE OUT THE DOOR FOR THIS SALE.”

– SATISFIED CLIENT

## CAMPAIGN RESULTS

**200+** BLACK FRIDAY  
SALES  
(GENERATED RECORD STORE SALES)

SOLD **67** DOOR BUSTER  
SOFAS

**DOUBLED**  
THE BUSINESS OVER PREVIOUS  
YEAR'S BLACK FRIDAY EVENT





**75% OF RURAL SHOPPERS**

**CHOOSE A RETAILER BASED ON AVAILABLE PROMOTIONS OR SALES.**

Utilize shared direct mail to deliver your Black Friday promotions to this highly engaged audience.

## **ABOUT MSPARK**

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We help companies reach people and grow their businesses by advertising to current and potential customers in rural America through shared direct mail.

Founded in 1988, Mspark is the premier mailing company serving rural America, with over 27 million households in our distribution footprint. The Mspark team prides itself on being a trusted partner for our 3000+ clients. Our value-oriented print and media distribution focuses on delivering measurable results and meaningful ROI in rural markets across America.

Want to learn more about the most cost-effective way to drive Black Friday sales?

**CONTACT US NOW**  
**1-855-209-8881**

