

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Peninsula, Cunard choose Cyber Monday for long-term benefits

November 28, 2016



Cunard Queen Mary 2

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As the frenzied holiday season begins, traditional retailers are reaping profits from increased traffic from over-the-top Black Friday deals, but for travel brands Cyber Monday is the day that wins out.

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As Black Friday traditionally sees a surge in foot traffic for retailers, the lack of bricks-and-mortar presence in terms of booking means that Cyber Monday is a better option for travel brands. Luxury hospitality brands such as Peninsula Hotels & Resorts, Marriott International's Starwood Hotels & Resorts, ocean liner Cunard and The Warwick Hotels are all hoping to see an increase in bookings by offering substantial deals that appeal to affluent consumers who, despite contrary belief, are still interested in a good deal.

"Cyber Monday has expanded beyond the holiday shopping space," said Taylor Rains, managing partner at **Flugel Consulting**, LLC. "Shopping behavior during the Black Friday / Cyber Monday weekend is no longer limited to gift purchases.

"People are taking advantage of the savings for themselves as well," he said. "Over the past several years, hotels, tours and airlines have all started venturing into the Cyber Monday promotional space.

"For the travel industry, doing so is just as much about visibility as it is about sales. Just like traditional retail, higher projected sales volume on Cyber Monday means brands can promote steeper discounts. The more significant the discount, the more "newsworthy" the event, promoting brand visibility."

Booking luxury

Carnival-owned Cunard is reeling in guests for future cruises by offering a bevy of options for discounts in an attempt to fill up trips for its Queen Mary 2 and Queen Victoria ships. Online customers who booked over the weekend leading up to Nov. 28 were able to receive a free upgrade from an inside room to a balcony.

The cruise line is also offer half off for third and fourth guests a part of a group booking and \$100 off for every guest on their deposit fee, which is required for every booking.

Starwood is offering a wide range of locations for its deals, which future guests are able to receive 35 percent off of.

Interested travelers can receive the discount for more than 11,000 hotels and book stays for any date up to September of 2017.



Starwood location in China

While the deal kicked off over the holiday weekend, the savings will last up until Dec. 4, 2016.

Last year, Starwood Hotels and Resorts encouraged its patrons to enjoy a vacation like they "meme" it.

To get consumers in the mood, the chain offered discounts ranging upwards of 25 percent off bookings. The offer helped hotels get involved in a busy shopping weekend that includes Black Friday and Cyber Monday 2015 ([see more](#)).

Warwick Hotels and Resorts launched its cyber sale on Wednesday Nov. 23, running until Monday Nov. 28. The weekend sales allowed customers to save more than 50 percent of its best rates for bookings between Nov. 24, 2016 to March 31, 2017.

The deal is limited to the Bahamas, New York, Denver, Seattle, Chicago, Dallas, Brussels, Geneva and Paris.

Peninsula Hotels for its New York, Chicago and Beverly Hills, CA locations is offering discounts on more than just deals, but spa and dining as well. A dedicated Web page on the Peninsula site features discounts and deals available exclusively from Nov. 25 to Nov. 28.



Peninsula New York room

Guests can receive 30 percent off on booking rooms with the codes NYCYBER and CHCYBER, unique to their respective locations. Spa guests can receive 25 percent off treatments such as massages and facials, 10 percent off gift cards.

The New York location is offering 25 percent off gift cards for its Clement restaurant and bar with purchase of \$100 or more, whereas Chicago is offering 10 percent off purchases of \$300 or more at its The Lobby and Shangai Terrace restaurants and 15 percent off Chocolate at the Pen in The Lobby.

Black Friday importance

Singles' Day has been known to catch the eye of most luxury retailers rather than Black Friday deals, but those that

continue to skip the discount-focused day will miss out, as even affluent consumers still appreciate a good deal.

A new survey from Deloitte has shown that consumers are planning on spending more this Thanksgiving compared to last year, with more than 76 percent of Americans planning to shop over the Black Friday weekend. Many luxury brands are finally taking the leap to incorporate a strategy for the major sales day such as Prada, Omega and Gucci, who are partnering with Walmart.com to feature heavily discounted luxury goods online over the weekend ([see more](#)).

"While Black Friday and Cyber Monday tend to bleed into each other, customer behavior is rather distinct between the two retail holidays," Mr. Rains said. "As the name implies, Cyber Monday deals are exclusively digital. Black Friday, on the other hand, is typically associated with brick and mortar retail and in-store promotions.

"As a result, Black Friday promotions are still strongly associated with holiday purchases - as brick and mortar retail locations typically turn over their window and in-store displays in advance of it," he said. "Cyber Monday, however, is almost entirely discount driven and not limited to gifts.

"This widens the audience significantly and promotes more traction in the market."

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