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Action plan for Black Friday
 Are you brave enough to venture out?

Comments

November 25, 2010

BY LAUREN FITZPATRICK

If today, for you, is simply hunkering down with family eating your favorite things on the good china and being grateful for all that you already have, then quit reading here.

Because from here on down, you'll meet the folks for whom the turkey also serves as fuel for a big night to come of deals! And bargains! And big ticket items for the lowest prices ever!

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Extreme couponing shopper Kristi Dorson (left) sorts through her coupons while friend Leslie Rissmiller (right) shops at a Target store in Munster, Ind. on Tuesday, Nov. 23. The Lansing women use a blog, coupons, codes and lists to find deals at local stores.
 | Joseph P. Meier-SouthtownStar

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Bob Klootwyk and his daughter, Kristen, 22, look over sales papers and Web sites for Black Friday sales on Wednesday, Nov. 24. Each year the Midlothian family gets out in the early-morning hours to gobble up the special sales items.
 | Joseph P. Meier-SouthtownStar

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to have the game plan."

In Lansing, Leslie Rissmiller has been picking up deals since last

We tracked down some of the Southland's savviest, most furious super shoppers and twisted their arms about their plans for getting the deals at stores that offer giant discounts in the wee hours.

They've learned from the past, honing their all-night shopping skills. They have lists, store layout plans, strategies, help from relatives.

And then they're off.

Come with us to see the show.

The Planners:

From Midlothian, Bob Klootwyk sets off for his single target store Thanksgiving eve, staying up all night for his wife, Beverly, who catches up closer to the opening bell. They seek a giant flat-screen TV and maybe laptop computers: "We're just looking for the deals on big ticket items. It has to be big ticket. I will not sit up all night for a \$100 item."

In Frankfort, Karen Zybak hosts a full team of loyal friends and family at her home, where she and husband Don dole out store assignments and dispatch their family of shoppers in the middle of the night. For her, the night of shopping has become a family affair. "I'm one of them crazy people. I've been doing this for 29 years before it was called Black Friday. Now because every store is on it, you have

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Christmas, stacking coupons on top of sales to get \$300 worth of stuff for \$100. She blogs about bargains she finds in the South Suburbs at <http://oneyeartodisney.blogspot.com>. Rissmiller, who cleaned up all this week with a friend near her home, will finish shopping for her little girl at midnight: "I'm only thinking about only doing one store. I really focus on the whole year round. For me Black Friday is great for a couple little things."

From Mokena, veteran shopper Rich Smith will sit this one out, burned from past attempts in vain to score a big TV by waiting all night in line: "I don't see the benefit of it. They're going to have big sales afterwards."

"The last few years, Black Friday hasn't been the end-all and be-all. It's been a tease."

The Plan:

These next 24 hours, for the bravest and sturdiest of Christmas shoppers, are crucial. And if all goes according to plan, here's what they'll look like:

Thursday:

By 6 a.m., when her morning paper showed up, Karen Zybak was already wide awake and ready to scan the last of the ads and make her list.

10 a.m. Karen makes two kinds of pies and several casseroles for Thanksgiving dinner. Bob Klootwyk's double checking his winter gear, making sure it'll stand an entire night outside.

1 p.m. The Zybaks sit with Karen's cousin for a long, leisurely dinner.

2 p.m. The Klootwyks sit down to eat with Bob's brother. They dine early so there's enough time for Bob to get ready and still arrive first outside the Best Buy.

4 p.m. Leslie Rissmiller sits down to dinner with her husband, 4-year-old daughter Claire, her parents and her in-laws, gives thanks for the doctors who've helped her through three bouts of meningitis this year.

5 p.m. Bob Klootwyk and his lawn chair arrive at the Best Buy, bundled against the predicted 18-degree overnight temps. Throughout the night, his daughters and wife will bring him coffee, snacks, boosts to morale.

10 p.m. Folks start showing up at the Zybak home, stuffed from dinner. Snacks are out, coffee's on for a long night of planning and playing. They compare lists of who wants what from each store, sort the goods by store, make assignments to each of the 12 or so who set out. Meanwhile, one daughter sets out for Toys R Us's Thanksgiving night sale, then on to Walmart for midnight.

Friday:

12:01 am: Leslie Rissmiller arrives at Walmart, hones in on \$4 pajamas for her daughter. Considers a certain digital camera. Checks out, calls it a night.

2 a.m. Karen heads out to drop her daughter in the line outside Target and hit Kohl's next door as soon as it opens at 3, trying to score a posh Kitchen Aid stand mixer.

3 a.m. Bob scores his doorbusters outside the Best Buy, two hours before the store officially opens. Rich Smith adjusts his covers in his Mokena home, rolls back over.

4 a.m. Karen and daughter enter Target. One heads to electronics, the other to clothing.

5 a.m. Best Buy opens its doors to Bob and to Karen's son.

6 a.m. Karen joins the relatives at Menard's.

9 a.m. The Zybak party heads back to headquarters to divide the spoils and settle up.

10 a.m. Rissmiller sets out to CVS and Walgreens for a few more everyday odds and ends.

And with that, the Christmas season has begun. Only 29 more shopping days left!

Super shoppers agree about a couple of things. To making a killing on Black Friday, you have to follow a few simple rules. And if you choose to ignore them, no deals for you!

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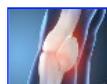
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Don't go it alone. Two hands aren't enough to really grab things.

But leave small children at home. If they're too small to help, they're only slowing you down. Not to mention, those rugrats take up valuable cart space.

Plan to shop, shop the plan. Running in blind means you'll miss the best stuff. And if it's not written down, how will you remember what you want should you get clocked in the head?

Show up early. By the time you read this, you're already too late. That TV is gone!

Look at store layout plans online ahead of time. You don't have energy to waste running to the wrong part of the store. Also, you can spread misinformation outside the store.

Wear comfortable shoes. Even though stilettos or big boots make for better stomping, your dogs will be barking before you make it to the other end of the store. This is the jungle, people, you've got take care of your feet! And without two good ones, you're as good as dead.

Don't forget your coupons. That's no joke. And organize by store, either with a separate list or by circling the printed ad.

Skip the whole thing. There's this thing now called "the Internet."

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POWERED BY  Pluck

no1saluki wrote:
@amanda p--

It's s-a-v-v-i-e-s-t as in savvy now saw.
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sherbk wrote:
People BS sooo much!
11/25/2010 8:20 PM CST on southtownstar.com
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1 year to disney wrote:
Orland Voter,

You sure had a lot of opinions for someone who doesn't know our situations.

I lost my job a year ago after having meningitis 3 times, and I still have the crippling headaches daily. I am unable to work, but I can sit at a computer and find ways to continue to keep my family afloat and still have Christmas presents under the tree for my little girl.

Additionally, I spent my time when I was well these past few weeks on the phone and internet raising money and presents for Operation Christmas Child and we were able to pack almost 400 boxes to send out for children who don't get Christmas presents.

I wonder what your house looks like. Empty tree with no presents for the family? 400 boxes of presents packed for needy children?

I doubt it.

And as far as my demeanor toward workers? I am kind courteous and polite, and have written glowing letters to management about stellar cashiers. I wrote one that day they did our article. I go above and beyond.

Merry Christmas to you and yours.
11/25/2010 2:14 PM CST on southtownstar.com
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kristi dorson wrote:
Wow, orlandvoter, how very Christian of you to cast such stones! You have read but a tiny snippet of our lives here, and yet you call us 'crazy people' and throw judgment like you are the right hand of God yourself. If you had even read the article you would see that some of us "super shoppers" don't even bother going out on Black Friday, and instead shop sales year-round. As for respecting store employees; speaking for myself, I am very appreciative of the difficult job these folks do and always go above and beyond to express my appreciation and make their jobs as easy as possible. Also, I'm sure many of those folks are grateful to HAVE a job in these difficult economic times (I lost mine over a year ago, which is what led me to becoming a 'super shopper' myself). As far as giving to charity goes, learning how to be an Extreme Couponer has allowed me to not only provide my family with plenty of good, nutritious food, it has allowed me to donate far more to my local food bank than I was ever able to before I started doing this. Perhaps it would behoove you to spend a little more time meditating upon your own religion and values this holiday season. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

11/25/2010 10:11 AM CST on southtownstar.com
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amanda p wrote:
What is "sawiest?" Does it have something to do with being sleepy and spendy at the same time?
11/25/2010 9:04 AM CST on southtownstar.com
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orlandvoter wrote:
I think it is absolutely terrible what these people are doing. They have absolutely no respect for store employees who have to go in hours before these sales start.
It's because of crazy people like those in these stories that the stores open earlier and earlier each year and now even open on Thanksgiving. No one even respects the meaning of the holiday

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