



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on November 30, 2011

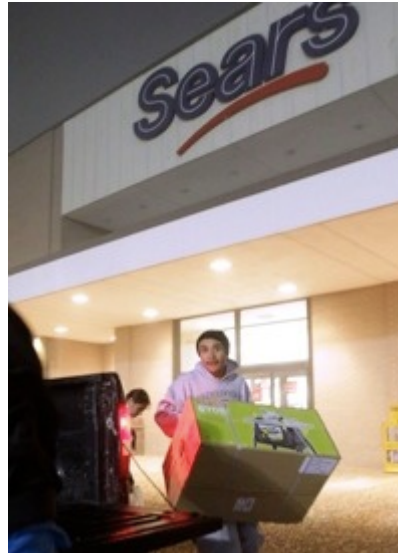
## Black Friday Sales: \$52.4B; Shoppers Reject Occupiers' Demand

OWS had hoped to launch protests that would stop the frenzy of consumerism, but alas, the lure of spending prevailed.

### "Buy Nothing Day" Failure

[According to](#) a release from NRF, "a record 226 million shoppers visited stores and websites over Black Friday weekend, up [6.6 percent] from 212 million last year." The statement continued,

Digging deep into their holiday budgets, the average holiday shopper spent \$398.62 this weekend, up from \$365.34 last year. Total spending reached an estimated \$52.4 billion.



Additionally, shoppers also checked out retailers' deals online, spending an average of \$150.53 on the web — 37.8 percent of their total weekend spending.

The spending increase per shopper from 2010, [NRF reported](#), was about nine percent. But spending overall, \$52.4 billion, jumped ahead of last year's \$45 billion by 16.4 percent, CNN reported.

NRF president and CEO Matthew Shay anticipates a strong holiday season, the [release said](#). He observed,

Stuffed to the brim from their holiday meals and eager to shop, more consumers than ever turned out for retailers' Black Friday promotions, a promising sign for the economic recovery.

After an historic holiday weekend, retailers know the holiday season is far from over and will continue to look for ways to excite holiday shoppers and build on the momentum we've seen thus far.

As for Thanksgiving itself, family ties and commitments didn't stop consumers from heading out to stores, [NRF reported](#):

28.7 million people shopped online and at stores on Thanksgiving Day — up from 22.2 million last year. More people than ever before also shopped online and in stores on Black Friday, as 86.3 million shoppers braved the crowds that day alone.

Continuing the momentum from 2010, the appetite for shoppers to get a head start on Black Friday continued, as nearly one-quarter (24.4%) of Black Friday shoppers were at the stores by midnight on Black Friday, either waiting for stores to open or visiting retailers who opened on Thanksgiving evening. By comparison, the number of people who were at the stores at midnight was 9.5 percent in 2010 and 3.3 percent in 2009.

### No Wonder OWS Flopped



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This was not welcome news for Occupy Wall Street, which attempted to stop the buying spree with a "[Buy Nothing Day](#)."

As [The New American reported](#) on Monday, and the numbers from NRF show, shoppers ignored the OWS protesters. Their most successful demonstration, it seems, occurred in San Francisco. [According to KGO TV](#),

Protesters occupied the entrances to stores like Macy's and Saks 5th Avenue, where they didn't always get a warm welcome.

But police were never far from the action, even as the demonstrators gathered at Macy's tree lighting ceremony.

"Today was a really good day to do it because people are all hyped up, looking for the sales and trying, just not thinking about people at all, they're thinking about money and so it's a good day for awareness," [a protester] said.

Unsurprisingly, parents were not happy, the [ABC affiliate reported](#). "That's the wrong time ... kids don't care, this is for the kids, it's not for politics," one parent told the station.

"If you put your abilities toward getting a job rather than saying somebody else is doing something wrong, and maybe there is that in our nation, to spend your time and efforts into something more positive would be a better thing," parent Cory Modersohn said.

Occupiers also attempted an invasion of Green Hills Mall in Nashville, Tennessee, but security guards booted them out. Another protest in Long Island, New York, flopped as well, but the occupiers did get to put in their two cents' worth on the busiest shopping day of the year. "Part of the Occupy message," a [protester told the Long Island Press](#), "is to stop feeding the corporate beast." She added,

People come and spend all their money and ring up their credit cards, and then afterwards they're suffering, because they can't pay the bills. And they're trying to decide whether they pay their rent or their health insurance.

This is a good time for us to be talking about it. [As] they're beginning the holiday push.

Shoppers, it seems, did not agree.

## **More Crimes**

OWS did succeed in piling up a few more crimes over the weekend, as [The New American reported](#) on Monday. Those continued into Monday night. Writing online at Big Journalism, [John Nolte reported](#) on Tuesday that the OWS crime log has reached 360.

At the Occupy Olympia protest at Washington's state capitol, an occupier bit a state trooper on the arm. During that uprising, occupiers stormed the capitol, but police removed them and arrested a "handful," Olympia's [KING 5 News reported](#). Police [tased](#) three of the occupiers.

In Portland, Oregon, an [occupier threatened](#) to burn down a woman's home, while occupiers in Los Angeles threw objects at police, the [Los Angeles Times reported](#).

Though "Buy Nothing Day" failed, occupiers did make a statement at at least one Walmart during Black Friday weekend. In San Diego, 75 occupiers went to a Walmart store, filled 75 shopping carts with merchandise, [then began](#) a long monologue/cheer led by one occupier and repeated by the rest. The transcript, [via Gateway Pundit](#), runs as follows:



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Mic Check! Citizens of Walmart!! Greetings and welcome back from the food coma!! In the spirit of holiday giving, we believe a discussion is in order about the meaning of value and low cost. For every low-priced product purchased at Walmart, your communities pay the difference. Every price drop represents mistreated workers who *still* cannot feed their families, *still* cannot afford their homes, and *still* cannot payoff their tuitions.

Every sweet deal can be attributed to our jobs being outsourced from American communities. Each item on sale helps bankrupt small businesses. *You, your communities, and your workers are being abused!!*

Walmart intentionally underemploys, forgoing *real* benefits for social services, costing California taxpayers \$86 million annually. Walmart employees are overworked, underpaid, and left underinsured in poor and unsafe conditions. Walmart could fire its employees for the mere mention of forming a workers union, which is the best tool American workers have to protect their rights. Corporate beasts such as this one bleed our communities dry by putting the local business owners, who actually have personal stake in your communities, at a disadvantage against these gluttonous juggernauts. Yet they have the nerve to tell you it's for your benefit.

*We do not have to buy the scam!! We do not have to buy dollar-collars for our families!! We do not have to buy any of this!! Self-made gifts have more power anyway!!* So this holiday season, give yourselves, your families, and your communities the gift of empowerment!! *Act locally!! Shop small business. Buy American!!* Thank you, Exit Safely, and remember to smile.

The protesters then departed the store.

Other occupiers at other Walmarts [handed out flyers](#) that told shoppers, "DON'T BE A CONSUMER WHORE. STOP FEEDING THE BEAST!"

Consumers ignored that advice. [According to](#) NRF's executive vice president, Phil Rist,

The appetite for these early openings is only getting stronger among holiday shoppers, and retailers did a great job providing Americans just what they wanted this weekend — the ability to shop on Black Friday without having to get out of bed before dawn.

Consumers are clearly demonstrating their desire to spend this holiday season, and shopping early and often seem to be their new mantra as they seek the best value for all their holiday purchases.

Yes, they are demonstrating their desire to spend. To put some perspective on how much money changed hands and how quickly, consider this: If Black Friday weekend is counted as 72 hours, shoppers spent \$12.1 million a minute.

*Photo: AP Images*



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