

Christmas shopping helper

LONDON, UK: Marks & Spencer UK High street retailer helps online shoppers avoid the stress of Christmas shopping. The aim is to help the retailer gain a bigger share of the online retail market.



During the 2009 December Christmas period, UK online retailers saw a 26% increase in revenues. According to one web monitoring company, 41% of shoppers were expected to spend more online during Christmas 2010 due to increasingly positive online shopping experiences. Iconic high street retailer Marks & Spencer needed to make sure that it secured a share of the growing online market, ahead of other retailers.

Christmas is a stressful time for many shoppers. Crowded shops, cold weather and lists of gifts to purchase all contribute to a miserable experience. Even though more shoppers are used to online environments, for stores like M&S that have a broad product range it can be difficult to replicate that in-store browsing experience in the online space.

Online and offline, one problem that is universal to all Christmas shopping is the challenge of buying the right gift for the right person.

A gift ideas tool

Marks & Spencer have a tradition of high profile advertising campaigns, spearheaded by big budget TV spots featuring high profile celebrity talent. In 2010, the Christmas campaign featured some online tools to make online shopping even easier for the stressed Christmas shopper, or the online shopping novice.

The M&S Christmas Helper is a gift ideas tool, where users select the person they are buying for, such as a friend or relative. They then select the age of the recipient, and their personality - with options such as "stylish", "sporty" and "foodie". The Helper tool then offers a selection of appropriate gifts.

Buying clothes as presents can be a risky choice. Most people at some point in their lives have been given a Christmas jumper that is either too big or too small, so M&S created the Size Detective tool that allows users to email friends anonymously to find out their correct sizes, without spoiling the surprise.

M&S TV, the retailer's online video platform also features short clips with food, fashion and makeup advice from celebrity experts for the festive season.

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