

# Lift new holidays to greater heights

**Everyone loves to celebrate! Holidays always mean concentrated consumption and increased spending during the peak period rather than steady spending over the year. More money in circulation enables higher turnover and better profits for retail. And there are still many holidays and occasions waiting to be included.**



We are approaching a holiday-intense period — Christmas and New Year’s as well as some new price-oriented occasions invented by retailers — Singles Day, Cyber Monday and Black Friday. Black Friday as a phenomenon has had an explosive impact in a record-short amount of time. The next Black Friday will be on 23 November. According to a survey conducted by PostNord, last year Swedes purchased price-reduced items for over SEK 5 billion during a single 24-hour period. Both Black Friday and the Christmas shopping period, which are forecast to reach SEK 80 billion in sales this year, demonstrate that consumers are eager to get behind phenomena that they perceive as being special. Interest in Singles Day — a Monday in November when consumers are encouraged to buy presents for themselves — is huge in China. The underlying logic is that ‘if you cannot be with someone you love, you can at least be with something you love’. According to the American business magazine Forbes, the Chinese retail platform Alibaba had turnover corresponding to SEK 225 billion during the 24-hour duration of Singles Day last year. To what extent and how ambitiously will Swedish retailers take advantage of this opportunity?

The ability of holidays to drive higher retail revenues shows that new occasions and holidays have significant and untapped potential. Perhaps the clearest example is related to people living in Sweden who have a background in another country. According to SCB, one out of every four Swedes has a foreign background. Individuals from Finland, Ethiopia, Syria, Iran, the USA and China, for example, celebrate occasions other than traditional Swedish holidays. For instance, Eid al-fitr, the holiday celebrated by Muslims that marks the end of Ramadan, and the Persian New Year have grown in importance as the number of people in Sweden with a foreign background has grown.

Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Valentine’s Day, Singles Day and Cinnamon Bun Day have been invented to give consumers something to celebrate and retailers the chance to increase their turnover. Shrimp Sandwich Day, Swedish Flatbread Day, Kladdkakan Day — the list of occasions to celebrate is long.

Retail is becoming increasingly personalised — you mix your own salad and design your own shoes. Consumers naturally welcome input when celebrating their holidays, not least occasions from their countries of origin. The FMCG trade already has shelves with food from other countries to meet the needs of people with a foreign background. The next step is to help out by calling attention to specific products for special occasions.



Retailers need to know when different occasions and holidays take place, which buying patterns need to be intercepted and which new ones can be created. More lamb and dates might be purchased during Ramadan, so retailers have a lot to gain by making these items more accessible and ensuring that they have plenty in stock. And why not invite Swedes to observe the occasion by having lamb stew for dinner or replacing Friday night crisps with dates or baklava?

Perhaps a more extensive service offering can be developed to include pre-packed grocery bags or suggestions for gifts for certain holidays. Pop-up shops aimed at specific occasions have begun to appear — and we are very likely to see more of them in the future.

*This report has been produced by Storesupport and HUI Research.*