

Black Friday: Why you should think twice about packaged deals

It's easy to be tempted by bundled product offers but if it's discounts you're after, you might want to think twice



Whether it's Black Friday, coming up on November 23rd, or any other day, the bundled product has long been a go-to offering for many retailers. Packaging multiple individual products into one deal with a single value can increase sales not only because marketing these offers attracts shoppers, but because it is easy to assume they come at a discounted price.

The traditional combo is arguably the fast-food 'meal deal'. The practice within restaurants to offer a side and a drink with the purchase of a main meal. The three items together are offered at a discount compared with the price of purchasing all three items separately. Discounts are great right?

Here are three key reasons why this value isn't always so grand.

1 Perceived sum of its parts

Research shows that when products are bundled together this can automatically increase how [valuable](#) we think the offering is. We don't simply see a creative way to apply a discount nor do we necessarily assume that the retailer bundles up these products because they know which items

should be bought together. In the face of bundled offers, we tend to stop thinking about individual products altogether and start to view the [combined](#) group as a new offering, not a sum of parts but a whole, and a valuable whole at that. Buying a new computer might meet your needs, but it can feel sensible to choose the additional software, mouse, case and spare charger as well, even if you were really just after the laptop.

2 It's not actually always about money

While bundles may save money, sometimes it is a [saving of time](#) that really entices a shopper. Bundled items are packaged up and prepared for us so may be preferred by consumers as a means to speed up the shopping process.

And we know this because bundled offerings don't actually have to offer a concrete saving in order to influence shopper activity. Even when there is no saving, some people will select bundles over individual products. In fact, it can also go the other way. In some cases, bundles can actually [disguise](#) a price rise of one or more items.

3 Sometimes it's about choice

We hate being overloaded with choice and bundles can help here too, as we like to make our decisions easier by eliminating too many options. A range of research shows that shoppers are more likely to buy products or participate in activities when there is a limited rather than an extensive range of [choices](#). We feel more comfortable making a choice when we aren't bombarded by an overwhelming number of options. And when we don't need to work through all of these choices we also feel greater satisfaction with the choice we do make. Packaged deals can be attractive if they remove the smaller choices we would need to make and combine them into larger selections. But this doesn't always come with a cost saving.

Motivation is key to bundle benefits

So when you are waiting for your favourite store to fling open its doors early on Black Friday, consider why you might jump at bundled deals. Sometimes there is a saving, but would you have bought all of the things in that bundle anyway? If not, then you have probably bought more than you intended, just to gain the 'discount'. And sometimes there is no monetary benefit there at all. While mental energy or time are up for grabs when we buy in bundles, it pays to remember that these offers aren't always about the money.