

5 Savvy Online Shopping Tips To Save Big & Buy Smart

1. **Comparing Prices:** Common sense tells us that one can get a much better price on virtually any retail product in the "off-season" which runs generally from mid-May through the end of August. Prices can be as low as 80% of their regular prices (even regular discounted prices) during the rough and tumble "finding just about whatever is left" during the holidays at inflated prices.
2. **Inventories:** Not too difficult to figure this one out. A store will discount a slew of products until they are all sold (or most of them sold) and then mark them back up. This is more common in brick and mortar retail stores than online stores in which you are often dealing directly with the manufacturer. For instance, my stores carry no in-house inventory. We have a deal with our manufacturers who package and drop-ship all items, as do many online retailers, making it a much better place to shop, not to mention more convenient, given the price gasoline, long lines, and aggravation.
3. **Convenience:** We no longer live in our parent's world. The baby boomer generation is busier than a Roman soldier fighting for an Empire. Who has time to shop? If shopping like I do, that is, wait until I know I need to purchase more than one gift, such as for holidays, or simply it so happens that anniversaries, birthdays, etc. of loved ones all fall within a 2-3 month period, I will always shop online, where I can buy five substantial gifts for often under \$100 and get free shipping to boot.
4. **Guarantees More Substantial Than Off-line Retailers:** You may not be aware, but when you see that a store offers a 30 day unconditional guarantee online, it is not just because the retailer is "being nice". The federal FTC enforces that guarantee as you are sending or wiring money online, and you better be able to get a refund if you are not satisfied. Of course most stores will act in goodwill anyway, whether online or not, but there is the occasional one who just doesn't "get it". Even your guarantee is guaranteed and bonded when shopping online. In the non-virtual world, the only retailers of which I know in which this type enforcement applies are used car dealers with the "Lemon Law".
5. **Uniqueness:** One of the greatest pleasures of shopping online are "the surprises". Psychologists say we (humans) are all "hunters", and we love the find as much as the hunt. So much more in the way of novelty and originality is offered online than at the local mall. I receive emails almost daily regarding our offbeat cartoon gifts and collectibles. I already know they cannot be bought in downtown or mall stores, and I purposely made it that way; not to be selfish, the opposite. Not only does this offer the buyer a pleasant surprise, he/she gets an even more pleasant one after realizing it is a factory-direct buy, saving a great deal of money any time of the year, plus getting a top-quality product (that hopefully makes them laugh) and quality customer service. Though my physical presence is in the U.S., these emails come anywhere from Japan to France.

With all this said and done, I still say "caveat emptor". Know with whom you are dealing. Do a Google search of the web-stores you plan to visit. Did they just open? Do they have good reviews? Are there complaints with the Online BBB or other scam alert centers? Always better to be safe than sorry. My experience of Internet shopping, using these few principles, has always made it a pleasant, fun, convenient experience.

About the Author

[Cartoonist/Entrepreneur Rick London In 1997, launched the Internet's Top Offbeat Cartoon Londons Times and A Gift Superstore with over 80.000 one-of-a-kind gifts](#)

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