November 20, 2026

Retailers Should Plan for Last-Minute Holiday Shopping in Beauty and Apparel This Year

Analysis of credit card transactions finds that sporting goods purchases ramp up earlier than other categories, driven in part by hunting season

MINNEAPOLIS--(BUSINESS WIRE)--

Based on an analysis of credit card transactions processed across a sample of about 50,000 small- and medium-sized retail merchants from 2022 through 2025, Deluxe Corporation (NYSE: DLX) found that while sporting-goods retailers who carry hunting equipment bagged their biggest haul around Thanksgiving, beauty, apparel, and accessory purchases increased sharply in the final two weeks before Christmas.

The boost in sporting goods transactions is likely due to the start of hunting season overlapping with Black Friday in many states, as well as to end-of-year rebates offered by hunting and outdoor adventure equipment manufacturers. In contrast, transactions involving beauty services, apparel, and accessories saw substantially larger increases when Christmas shopping was down to the wire.

These category-specific patterns take on added importance in a year when many consumers are managing tighter budgets. The 2026 Consumer Holiday Spending Study from The Strawhecker Group and the Electronic Transactions Association found that 44% of consumers report greater financial stress than last year and 72% plan to set a holiday budget. With shoppers more deliberate about when and how much they spend, knowing which categories peak early versus late can help retailers make sharper decisions on inventory, staffing, and promotions.

“This is a great example of how the combination of Celero and Deluxe can transform data into useful insights for our customers and partners,” said Kevin Jones, president of Deluxe Merchant Services. “Understanding how and when consumers spend empowers businesses to make better decisions about staffing, inventory, and marketing, and we’re in a great position to help small- and medium-sized businesses interpret the data Deluxe has accumulated.”

Across all retail categories analyzed, the increase in transactions between Thanksgiving week and the mid-December shopping period narrowed substantially over the four-year study. In 2022, average transactions per merchant were 17% higher during the peak Christmas shopping week than during Thanksgiving week. That difference narrowed to 16% in 2023 and just 1% in 2024, before recovering modestly to 4% in 2025.

In 2025:

- Beauty services: Average transactions per merchant increased 18% in the week before Christmas compared with Thanksgiving week.
- Apparel and accessories: Average transactions per merchant increased 20% during Christmas week compared with Thanksgiving week.
- Sporting goods stores processed approximately 18.9% more payment volume per merchant during Thanksgiving week in 2025 than their average weekly volume during the two weeks leading up to Christmas.

The same TSG/ETA study found that 57% of consumers would shop elsewhere or be less likely to return if their preferred payment method wasn't available—reinforcing that capturing concentrated late-season demand also requires offering the payment options shoppers expect.

For information about how Deluxe serves small- and medium-sized retailers, visit www.deluxe.com/who-we-serve/retail-small-business/.

About Deluxe Corporation

Deluxe, a trusted Payments and Data company, champions business so communities thrive. Our solutions help businesses pay, get paid, and grow. For more than 100 years, Deluxe customers have relied on our solutions and platforms at all stages of their lifecycle, from start-up to maturity. Our powerful scale supports millions of small businesses, thousands of vital financial institutions and hundreds of the world's largest consumer brands, while processing more than $2 trillion in annual payment volume. Our reach, scale, and distribution channels position Deluxe to be our customers' most trusted business partner. To learn how we can help your business, visit us at www.deluxe.com.

View source version on businesswire.com:
https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20261120076269/en/

Brian Anderson, VP, Strategy & Investor Relations
651-447-4197
brian.anderson@deluxe.com

Keith Negrin, VP, Communications
612-669-1459
keith.negrin@deluxe.com

Source: Deluxe Corporation