

## **Nearly 70 per cent of SMEs will not capitalise on Black Friday**

### **Almost seven in ten Irish SMEs do not provide an online shopping service and risk losing out on Black Friday trade.**

Just under 70 per cent of Irish SMEs will miss out on Black Friday trade as a result of not being able to take sales orders online, according to a recent report published by IE Domain Registry, the company that manages and maintains Ireland's country domain, .ie.

As one of the busiest shopping weekends of the year approaches, Irish consumers expect that 62pc of their Black Friday weekend spend will be transacted online.

However, according to IE Domain Registry's SME Digital Health Index 2019, which analyses Irish SMEs and consumers' attitudes to digital technology, only 32pc of Irish SMEs' websites allow them to take sales orders or process transactions.

Despite Irish SMEs' lack of e-commerce capabilities, 59pc of Irish consumers say that it is important for them to be able to make a purchase online. More than half (53pc) believe that online shopping will, at some point, replace traditional shopping.

However, almost a third of Irish SMEs don't have a website and a further 60pc do not promote themselves online in any way.

Broken down by region, only 20% of SMEs in the capital plan on offering any Black Friday or Cyber Monday deals. That number drops to 13pc in Connacht and Ulster, 12pc in the rest of Leinster, and just 7pc in Munster.

Commenting on the report's findings, IE Domain Registry CEO David Curtin said; "As we approach Black Friday and Cyber Monday, we are reminded of the competitive nature of the retail industry. Consumers are already seeking the best offers they can find, and online platforms allow them to compare promotions within Ireland and outside it.

"Irish SMEs' online presence is relatively high. Almost 90% have at least one digital asset, such

as a website or social media page. However, it is the gap in these businesses' ability to use their online platforms for e-commerce that reduces their attractiveness to the online consumer," says Curtin.

As a result, Curtin believes that a significant portion of Ireland's online spending goes overseas. "To combat this, Irish SMEs must adapt their digital offering in line with changing consumer attitudes to buying goods and services online.

"This doesn't mean that all of your business should be online, rather that your online presence should complement your in-store experience. Providing options such as click-and-collect or the ability to reserve an item in store, are e-commerce methods that are easily adapted for SMEs of all sizes and can encourage in-store shopping," he added.

Core Research surveyed 1,000 Irish SMEs in July 2019 on their use of and attitudes to digital technology and e-commerce; and 1,000 Irish consumers in September 2019 on their attitudes to digital technology, e-commerce, and retail trends.

*By Stephen Larkin*

*Published 27 November, 2019*