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SHOPPING ALERT

Do Sales With Expiration Dates Work Retail Magic?

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Being indecisive, I tend to avoid any form of stressful shopping, whether it's a YSL sample sale or even a boutique with a pushy owner. But my interest was piqued yesterday when I found an e-mail from [Neiman Marcus](#) in my inbox touting its Midday Dash, an exclusive two-hour online sale with prices slashed in half. I clicked only to find that the sale had ended, but I did manage to see that a lot of the merch, like a Tory Burch bag marked down from \$450 to \$225, had actually sold out. The ticking clock

seemed to have worked its marketing magic. Of course, creating a sense of urgency isn't a new retail trick; anyone who's watched [QVC](#) knows that. But it seems to be working its way into the higher end, particularly online, where it's easier to reach customers for something as blink-and-miss as a two-hour sale. Online sample saler [Gilt.com](#), which keeps all of its sales to 36 hours, has become a hit with designer-obsessed and shopping-as-sport types. Every Gilt page has the sale's expiration date clearly marked at the top, but Gilt Groupe's manager of marketing and communications, Amanda Graber, reports that 30 percent of its traffic comes in the first hour of a sale, while 50 percent is in the first three. All of its sales start at noon, making it easy for shoppers to work it into their daily routines. Meanwhile, *WWD* reports that Net-a-Porter's soon-to-launch bargain site [theoutnet.com](#) will feature regular pop-up sales. I'm predicting it'll capitalize on the ticking-clock effect, too. During These Times, the thrill of a bargain is pretty satisfying, so is scoring it like you're shopping on *24* even better? Tell us what you think. Do sales with expiration dates put you in shopping mode?

—Meenal Mistry

tags: Neiman Marcus, Net-a-Porter.com, Tory Bu, Yves Saint Laurent

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style file brings you news and analysis—and great shopping tips—from the global fashion scene.