

BTS NRC 2007 - Tricks of the seasonal sales – transcript

Ed Monk, This is Money
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One Christmas tradition that shows no sign of dying out is the January sales. Last year an estimated £5bn was spent during the sales on Boxing Day alone. But bargain hunters should beware the tricks that retailers use to part them from their money.

We asked a few shoppers their opinion .

James, from the UK

There are strict rules that shops must follow when they hold a sale, but retailers have stretched the law so that it is easy for shoppers to believe discounts are bigger than they actually are.

Tony Northcott, a spokesman for Trading Standards, said:

I tend to be cynical and assume that no discount is as good as it seems. It is illegal for shops to lie about the discounts available in sales, but buyers need to be aware that they are unlikely to get the discount they see advertised.

Julie , London

Offers promising reductions of 50% or more are common. You won't be surprised to hear that not all the items on sale will be subject to this level of discount.

In fact, a store only needs to stock 10% of items at the highest advertised level of discount in order to meet the rules.

What's more, shops that have more than one branch do not offer the same bargains in all branches. A common tactic is for shops to advertise a particularly eye-catching deal while including – usually in small print – that the offer only applies in participating stores. It might be that the best discounts only apply in a chain's flagship store.