

QVC's \$42 million Black Friday sets sales mark

By Brian McCullough

Electronic retailer QVC said it enjoyed the largest Black Friday in its 24-year history this year as it took in more than \$42 million in sales.

Leading the way, the company said, were electronics, beauty products and accessories.

Forty percent of QVC's Black Friday sales came from online shoppers as opposed to call-in orders and, continuing into Cyber Monday, orders from mobile devices were up significantly this year, said Doug Howe, QVC's executive vice president of merchandising and planning

"Mobile is becoming very important to us, it's coming up very fast," Howe noted. "The growth rate is significantly faster than we anticipated."

Customers were invited to begin their holiday shopping not long after the Thanksgiving turkey was put away with QVC's "The New Black Friday."

The special programming event featured deals on select, new gifts and "While Supplies Last" prices on limited-quantity, in-demand items. QVC.com offered additional specially priced products and featured online countdown offers in every hour, the company said.

"After last year's record-setting Black Friday, our merchandising team was determined to fulfill our customers' gift-giving needs with another superior product mix. Our customer response can only mean that we exceeded their expectations and delivered on our promise to provide all of the joy, none of the craziness," said Claire Watts, QVC's president of U.S. Commerce, in a prepared statement.

Several products contributed to QVC's Black Friday success, including the Panlimage 7-inch Touchscreen Google Android WiFi Tablet, the Sharp AQUOS Quattron LED/LCD TV, the Canon EOS Rebel T2i Digital SLR camera, and the Mario 25th Anniversary Red Nintendo Wii gaming system with accessories.

QVC's record sales come amid reports that the holiday shopping season got off to a respectable start over the weekend.

Add in strong spending earlier in the month and robust sales online, and retailers are feeling encouraged. That's particularly true because shoppers also scooped up fashion and other items for themselves, though mostly where they saw bargains. The question remains how many dollars shoppers are prepared to spend before Dec. 24 in an economy that's still bumpy.

Howe said QVC is aware that some question the sustainability of the good start to the season for retailers and isn't overconfident.

"Customers are definitely being selective," Howe noted. "We're very encouraged by the early results. We're confident in our strategy and optimistic, but you never want to get too comfortable."

QVC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Liberty Media Corp. attributed to the Liberty Interactive Group (Nasdaq: LINTA), is one of the largest multimedia retailers in the world.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.