

HOLIDAYS

A Game Plan for Buying the Perfect Holiday Gift

NewsUSA

(NU) - Okay, here's a quick question for all you holiday shoppers out there: Which do you dread more – and be honest – a letter from the IRS or having to choose the “perfect” gift for everyone on your list?

Don't be embarrassed if you picked the latter. These days, given all the pressure to out-Santa Santa, Consumer Reports is right when it says the holidays “can bring out the Grinch” in even the best of us.

To save you from that fate, here are some do's and don'ts to help get you through the season:

- **Don't think risking life and limb at door-busters is the only way to get the best deals.** Assuming – and it's a big assumption – that you actually do manage to be among the lucky ones to snag a \$169 39-inch HDTV, why bother waiting hours outside in the freezing cold for a store to open? After too many incidents of people being trampled by Crowds Gone Crazy, DealNews reports that more and more retailers are making those same deals available online.

- **Do try an online gift registry.** Probably the best of them all, MyRegistry.com, not only lets members compile their own wish lists of items spotted on virtually any store's website, but – and here's the neatest part for both gifters and giftees – they can share their lists with anyone via e-cards, Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest.

“I hear so many stories of people telling me, ‘You won't believe the [ridiculous] present my hus-



Who needs door-busters when there are so many other ways to shop this season?

band got me for Christmas last year.” says Nancy Lee, president of the company, which has logged more than 120 million gift requests since its 2005 launch. “This just totally eliminates that.”

If you're not into social media, the site also shows which gift requests are trending in real time. And there's even a new option that lets you give cash gifts – either as a donation to a charity in that person's name (good for those who truly do have everything) or to help fund a winter vacation, say, that giftees have let it be known they crave.

- **Don't be so sure your gift cards get used.** According to the National Retail Federation, an estimated \$2 billion in such cards went unredeemed last year. As to whether they're a cop-out or not, you decide.

Finally, stallers take note: Grabbing whatever's left on the shelves won't win you brownie points. “Remember that workout DVD?” one writer at AskMen.com warned. “So does she.”