

Online Sites Court Procrastinators with Speedy Shipping

Amazon has added warehouses and carriers have increased shipping to address last-minute demand

By MAE ANDERSON
AP Technology Writer

ATLANTA — Forget ordering online weeks in advance or dashing out to the drug store for a gift card on Christmas Eve. Procrastinating holiday shoppers are finding a haven online as retailers ramp up expedited shipping and same-day delivery services.

Far from discouraging last-minute online shoppers, retailers are actually courting them. Amazon is offering a “Procrastinator’s Delight” special. Clothing retailer Madewell proclaims on its website that “procrastinators get the best deals” — 25 percent off everything, with orders as late as noon Thursday for holiday deliveries.

It’s a far cry from 2013, when Amazon

and package deliverers misjudged demand and delivered some holiday packages after Christmas. Since then, the Seattle company has added warehouses to be closer to customers. It has also leased jets and trucks to get packages delivered on time — even last-minute orders. Package carriers such as FedEx and UPS have also increased staffing and hired outside contractors for the holiday season.

“So many people are shopping online because it’s easier,” said Sucharita Mulpuru, chief retail strategist for the ShopTalk retail conference. “They’re waiting for last minute because nobody is encouraging them to shop earlier.”

Trust In Reliability

If you’re an online shopper in the

days leading up to Christmas and Hanukkah, be ready to forgo free shipping and shell out for expedited service. Look for sites that offer detailed shipping information. And check where the package is coming from — if it’s shipping from China or the U.K., you won’t get it in time.

But the extra cost and vigilance is worth it to those seeking to avoid the hassles of jam-packed stores, crowded parking lots and frenzied crowds.

Laura Curtis turned to expedited two-day shipping from Etsy and elsewhere when she realized she needed more gifts for her nieces and nephews.

“I’m usually way done by now,” said the writer from Mt. Kisco, New York. But she said she has faith that she’ll get her packages on time. “Our FedEx guy

is really reliable.”

Although a union warned that Amazon might not be able to retain enough pilots under contract to deliver packages through its new airline shipping service, Prime Air, Amazon said it doesn’t expect any delays.

Spiraling Demand, More Services

The number of holiday packages has been rising each year as more people shop online. Research firm comScore predicts online shopping during the November and December holiday period will rise as much as 19 percent from last year to \$81 billion. That compares with an expected 3.6 percent rise in overall shopping during the same period to \$656 billion, according to the

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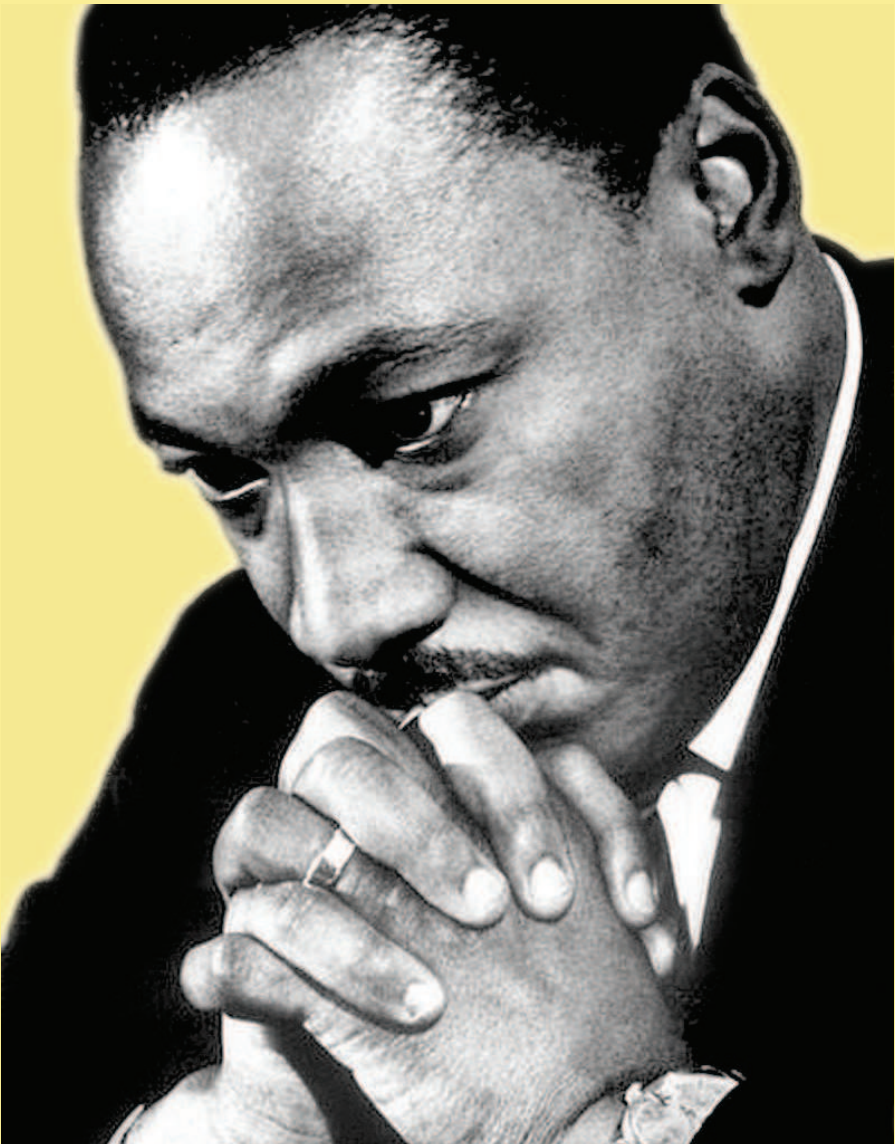
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KEYNOTE SPEAKER
HOWARD MOORE, JR.

CIVIL RIGHTS ATTORNEY

Attorney Howard Moore, Jr. earned his B.A. degree in 1954 from Morehouse College, and his LL.B. degree from Boston University School in Law. In 1962 he joined the Atlanta law firm of Moore, Alexander and Rindskopf. As one of only 10 black lawyers in Georgia, Moore worked long hours and traveled on Sundays with Vernon Jordan. Moore has represented both Julian Bond (1966) and Angela Davis (1971-1977).

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