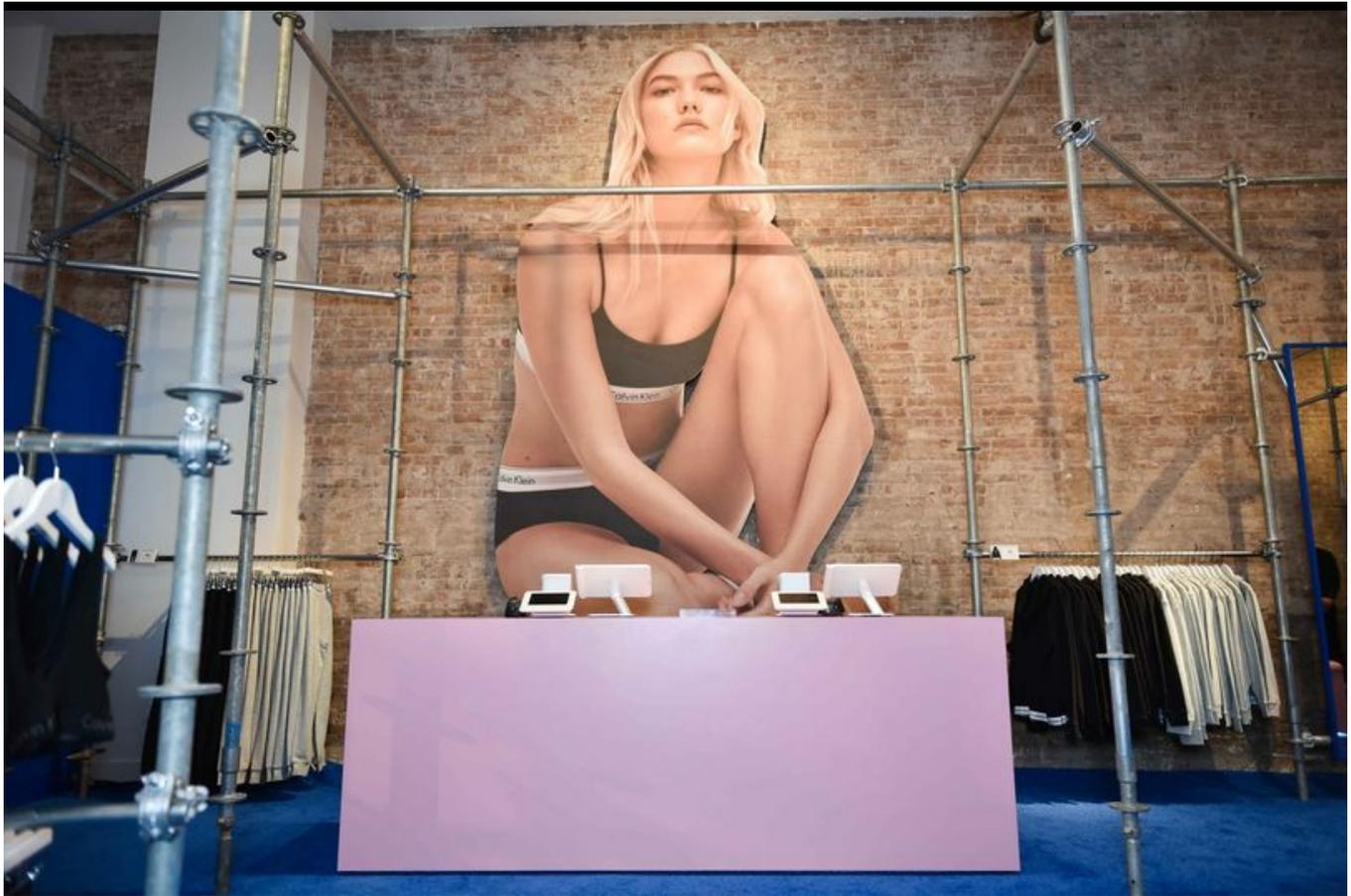


WHAT IF EVERY DAY WAS BLACK FRIDAY?

By Claire Hobson

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Calvin Klein and Amazon Fashion pop-up, New York. Photography by Griffin Lipson

‘ What would happen if retailers removed specific events that spike our motivation to shop? What if every day was the best-price day? ’

— *Claire Hobson, co-founder, Irregular Labs*

Attracting price scavengers and almost every American seeking an excuse to escape their in-laws after Thanksgiving, Black Friday is here once again. It's savage and occasionally fatal, as hordes of consumers appear to think nothing of risking death and dignity for double-digit discounts and bundle buys. But what would happen if retailers removed specific events that spiked our motivation to shop? What if every day was the best-price day?

That's the concept that greets consumers when they enter the semi-high-tech, semi-industrial Calvin Klein and Amazon store thrown together in the heart of New York's SoHo. Outside, from a queue worthy of any club night, people are ushered in to the store by a concierge and handed over to crew members to show them around. Visitors can connect to wifi, swipe across screens, or ask Alexa to adjust the colour of the lighting as she attends to them in the fitting room. Fancy a little Beyoncé while you try on that bra? No problem.

But the centrepiece of the experience is that the garments carry no pricing or tags. Prices can vary on different days because they're driven by the market. Consumers scan shelf tickets with their Amazon app, the current best price on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) appears and that's what they pay, after being asked if they would like the item shipped to their home via their Amazon Prime account, or checked out by the team in the store. It's seamless, a tangible version of that euphoric 'your item has shipped' feeling brought to life at last in the real world.

Covering fewer than 2,000 square feet, this makeshift store is the poster child for 'future of retail' conversations around the need for bricks-and-mortar shopping, seamless brand experiences, technology and innovation investment, the need for speed, programmatic commerce and frictionless transactions.

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But that's not the whole story. From the outset, the Calvin Klein and Amazon collaboration seemed an unusual partnership for launching a new retail pricing concept. An underwear brand with ubiquitous distribution, from Target to Saks and every place in between, has decided to sell exclusively through Amazon from now on.

At face value, both brands appear to benefit from their broad demographic and the easily purchased no-nonsense-essentials nature of the product. But these two heavyweights need one another for a marriage of retail convenience. The CK brand bolsters the fledgling Amazon Fashion portfolio, giving it cultural kudos, while Amazon gives Calvin Klein control of its previously fragmented pricing and distribution. It's a beneficial union.

So it begs the question: why does Calvin Klein and Amazon offer a best-price pop-up at all? The best-price model works for genuine marketplace facilitators, but exclusive distributors of a product won't necessarily offer the best price because they are the only seller.

Such everyday adaptive pricing partnerships will fundamentally change the promotional retail calendar and dilute the Black Friday circus to modernise sales models for 21st-century shoppers. Whether these daily price shifts will enamour or alienate the next generation of consumers, who value fair trade and transparency, is still uncertain. But it's a gamble on which Amazon Fashion president Christine Beauchamp and Calvin Klein CEO Steve Shiffman are willing to place a big first bet.

Claire Hobson is co-founder of [Irregular Labs](#) and our former global business director. Learn how to future-proof your retail business [here](#).

What this means for your brand

- : From fashion to [groceries](#), retailers are looking to use adaptive pricing models to help them build consumer loyalty and cut waste
- : E-commerce giant Amazon is increasingly transforming the world of bricks-and-mortar retail, from its purchase of [Whole Foods](#) to the integration of its technology into [third-party stores](#)