



## Industry positive on Christmas, 2014

December 19, 2013

Earlier this week we asked a few local distributors for feedback on trading in the lead-up to Christmas.

Pleasingly, they all took the time to respond to our three-questions 'survey':

- How has trading been in the lead-up to Christmas?
- Any particular stand-out lines which indicate what consumers are interested in?
- Any sense of how post-Christmas might pan out?

Here are their insights:

Steuart Meers, Tracy Lints, Photo Direct

From a Photo Direct sell-in perspective, pre-Christmas build up has been very strong. Mass merchants stocked up early and are trading well. Specialists were more conservative in their ordering but are catching up now.



Sell-through feedback from stores has been a bit patchy. Last weekend saw a lift but not queues out the door, it seems there is a bit of an incremental increase each day, and the general feeling is this weekend will be the tipping point. There is no strong trend either towards or away from shopping strips compared to shopping centre locations; and some country towns are trading well and others are not, so there is no really clear pattern.

The good margin display and home décor products such as canvas and Vision Wall are selling extremely well.

Calendars and photo books haven't been as strong this year in the retail store channel, but talking with other channels and online deal sites they have been huge, so that reflects another channel shift and not a loss of interest by the consumer.

The market shift will continue away from standard print products. This opens up a huge opportunity for specialty stores to shift focus (if they haven't already) to wide-format, home décor, etc; and to reposition themselves as 'the specialists' by offering an extensive range of ideas, new products and personal service.

Online and mobile apps will be essential for all retailers.

Robert Gatto, Kayell Australia

The traffic through the showrooms has been down slightly but online sales are up considerably and sales are up in general.



We have seen a big uptake in Camranger, it seems to be a hot product for us at the moment, I suppose with so many iPads been sold for Christmas this is just a add-on to it.

We have also seen a big uptake in Strobist (studio flash) equipment for Christmas, and lots of accessories for speed lights are being sold through the online store.

Being more of a pro outlet we tend to have a very slow post-Christmas and it isn't until maybe the middle of January or early February until we see our sales ramp back up.

Robert Dessmann, APS

Sales in the lead up to Christmas have been quite steady. November was an exceptional month for us and there are early signs that December will be as strong.



Sales have been strong across most categories. Sublimation products and camera accessories have been above expectation and we have also been able to place a large



quantity of digital frames. All brands of wet and dry consumables have been strong through the last quarter.

I would love to be able to say that it will continue, but it is far too early to gauge. We are expecting a slower January but we are also seeing that some consumer confidence has been restored. Is this enough to translate in better than expected sales in January? Let's hope so.

Stuart Holmes, IPS

2013 has been a good year for Independent Photo (IPS), in terms of Kodak's emergence out of Chapter 11, strengthening customer confidence and sales. It has also been a watershed year for the change in printing technology from traditional silver halide-based printing to that of various drylab technologies such as Kodak APEX (Thermal Dye-Sublimation) and Noritsu dye-based inkjet minilabs.



Independent Photo were once again invited to present to the PSPA at The IDEA / PMA Show in Melbourne in September on the topic of 'The Dry Lab vs Wet Lab Opportunity', as well as having a practical demonstration showcase of the two major technologies at the IPS Trade Show Stand. IPS demonstrated and discussed the latest Kodak APEX and Kodak kiosk offerings alongside the new Noritsu QSS Green Dry Lab, with a number of sales into premier photo specialty labs across the country as a result of a successful showing.

It is evident the industry now appreciates the major USP's of going dry, those being the very high print quality, ease of operation and intuitive user interfaces, and massive saving in power consumption that both the Kodak APEX and Noritsu Dry Lab Systems deliver, and have a better understanding of when they should switch from 'wet' to 'dry'. As a result, 2014 will be a tipping point for many new photolab sales.

2013 is also poised to be a very busy retail Christmas period for photo specialty services, with forecasts predicting a rise in retail takings by 5 percent over last year's Christmas period. Our sales and level of activity are already supporting this prediction.

As distributor, IPS is a B2B company, but we have had feedback from customers of longer than normal delivery times even two weeks out from Christmas. This supports earlier reports that courier and post services have experienced an unforeseen increase in deliveries from online sales, putting their service under strain.

Retailers positive

- We decided against pressing retailers for contributions, reasoning that they would rather be selling stuff than talking to journalists over this busy period, but picked up a few comments which are worth republishing:

John Ralph, John Ralph Camera House, Erina, told *Connected Australia* that he was 'quite happy' with sales to date which are keeping pace with last year.

'The Sony A7 has been selling through, particularly in the kit; Fuji, both Fuji compact and their longer zooms, and the new X-Series, they're probably a standout improvement over last year.

He said binoculars were enjoying a resurgence and studio gear, including basic backdrops was also in demand.

Demand for camera accessories was 'bigger than ever' reflecting consumer interest in interchangeable cameras, with the OM-D a stand-out in the mirrorless interchangeable category.

'People are looking at accessories to go with digital SLRs, as far as video, microphones, pop-ups, shoulder supports, things like that.

'We may not sell everyone a camera, but I'm focusing on selling everyone who has a camera some sort of accessory.'

Nic Peasley, CEO, Ted's Cameras, told the same website earlier in December that 'we expect Christmas to mark the turnaround in retail'.

'We feel that we have momentum after a fantastic week one in December, and the mid-to-top-end interchangeable lens cameras are still very, very strong.

'Olympus has a fantastic new OMD to partner the current OMD model, with Fuji's X series cameras also very strong.

'Sony mid-to-top-end compacts are moving very well through our stores, as is the new A7 interchangeable lens camera from them.

'The TZ40 from Panasonic will remain a star performer, and we have high expectations

at the top end of the market with Leica – this is really an iconic-must have brand that appeals to the true photo enthusiasts.

‘Watch out for Lomography film cameras, plus the Fuji Instax instant cameras; GoPro should also remain a strong seller through Christmas and January.

‘The March new product releases should tell the real story in terms of product advancement – so stay tuned.’



## Leave a Reply

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked \*

Name

\*

Email

\*

Website

Comment

### Recent Related Posts

#### [IDEA'S DIGITAL PLAYGROUND PLANS FIRM](#)

IDEA, in association with the AIPP, December 12, 2013 has confirmed it will wrap three days of seminars, workshops and exhibits around the 2014 AIPP Australian

#### [CANON EXPANDS B2C STRATEGY](#)

Canon is further developing its direct-to-consumer strategy with a Canon Rewards Club, offering 'awesome discounts, unique offers and special promotions' to members of a range of December 5, 2013