

# Amazon's Prime Day Is Growing as Tariff Jitters Rise

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As it announced at the end of June, Amazon has decided to double the length of Prime Day from two days to four.

And while an Amazon spokesperson told ADWEEK that the reason for stretching its members-only sale event to nearly a week was to give “Prime members... more time and flexibility to conveniently shop,” it’s also clear that the world’s largest online retailer is aware of why Americans are in the mood for deals right now.

Speaking to Jim Cramer on CNBC last week, Amazon CEO Andy Jassy said he thought consumers would be “pretty excited” about a 96-hour Prime Day, “especially at this time” when “people are a little worried about what’s going to happen with trade.”

With that careful, diplomatic phrasing, Jassy seemed to be touching on anxieties that some, like retail analyst Bruce Winder, put more plainly.

“Consumers right now are a little tight with their wallets based on [their] fear of trade issues, fear of geopolitical issues, and fear of inflation,” said Winder, adding that “stubborn” interest rates have stirred up consumer angst, too.

“Amazon is not dumb,” Winder continued. “They realize they have to offer some really sharp pricing to get people to buy this year.”

Several recent studies document that reticence. For instance, the Conference Board’s Consumer Confidence Index fell by 5.4 points in June, with 70% of consumers indicating they considered a recession somewhat or very likely in the next 12 months.

A McKinsey survey released May 30 found that inflation and rising prices are a concern for 43% of consumers, with tariffs having moved into second place on the worry list: 29% of respondents admit to fretting about them. As a consequence, 43% of respondents said they’d be on the lookout for lower-priced products, and 20% indicated they’d “make purchases sooner,” before tariff fallout is at its worst.

In a similar vein, July research from Alix Partners revealed that 28% of consumers said they “made purchases earlier than planned in the last six months to avoid extra tariff-related costs.”

According to brand leadership authority Denise Lee Yohn, another reason Amazon may have opted to double the length of Prime Day this year is “to block out or outdo competitors.”

“Retailers, including Walmart and Target, started offering their own summer sale events years ago to compete with Amazon,” Yohn said. “Now, many are extending the length of their sales to increase their competitiveness, and Amazon is retaliating. So, an escalating cycle has resulted.”

Amazon introduced its signature promotional event in 2015, “as a way to celebrate Prime members on Amazon’s 20th birthday,” according to the company. As its name suggests, Prime Day originally ran for 24 hours. By 2017, however, the day had grown to 30 hours and, come 2018, it had stretched to 36 hours.

When Prime Day morphed to 48 hours in 2019, people bought 175 million items. Winder speculates that the decision to push Prime to four days this year may also stem from Amazon’s reluctance to break its own trend line.

“They’re probably a little nervous that, if they had it for two days, with consumers the way they are, what if it doesn’t perform?” he said. “It’s an insurance policy to make sure it gets over the finish line and that it’s bigger than last year.”