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"Retailers have their work cut out for them during the 2015 winter holiday season given that 2014 was touted as one of the strongest in recent years. However, positive economic factors like higher consumer confidence, lower gas prices, and an improving job market signal that comping over 2014 is attainable."

- Diana Smith, Senior Research Analyst - Retail & Apparel

This report looks at the following areas:

- Signs are positive for a strong winter holiday season
- The endless cycle of deals and discounts
- · Consumers are shopping on their own terms

For purposes of this report, "holiday shopping" refers to expected consumer expenditures on holiday-specific items such as gifts, decorations, seasonal candy and other food, greeting cards, and other expenditures. This report focuses on winter holidays (Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa) as they represent the bulk of total holiday expenditures.

This report builds on the analysis presented in Mintel's *Winter Holiday Shopping – US, August 2014, Holiday Shopping – US, July 2013, 2012, 2011, June 2010,* and *Holiday Shopping: The Market – US, July 2007.*

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