



## CLICK VS. BRICK: DRAMATIC PRICE DIFFERENCES FOUND AT THE SAME CHAIN

(BOSTON – December 8, 2014) New shopping caveat: Don't assume that a retailer offers the same prices online as it does at its brick-and-mortar stores. And don't assume that their online prices are always cheaper. That's the conclusion of Consumer World's spot-check of items sold both in-store and online by some major retailers.

When price differences were found, online versus off, they ranged from as little as 50 cents to nearly \$200 depending on the item.

"There is no universal rule-of-thumb that prices are always cheaper online compared to the retailer's own brick-and-mortar store," explained [ConsumerWorld.org](http://ConsumerWorld.org) founder Edgar Dworsky. "In fact, many times the prices are the same, but other times they could be either higher or lower on their website. You always have to check and compare both online and in-store prices if you want the best deal."

Dworsky became interested in price variations between brick-and-mortar stores and their online counterparts when he spotted Sears advertising a set of Kenmore cookware for \$129.99 in its Sunday circular in September. At Sears.com, however, the exact same set was \$50 less the same day:

<p><b>20-50% off cookware</b> Reg. 2.98-249.99 sale 1.98-199.99</p> <p><b>\$129.99 SALE</b> YOUR CHOICE Kenmore 10-pc. stainless steel or hard anodized cookware set Reg. 169.99-179.99</p>	<p>Kenmore 10 pc. Hard Anodized Interior Cookware Set</p> <p>★★★★☆ 42 Reviews Description Specifications</p> <p><b>Special offer</b> Free shipping! Orders \$59 or more</p>	<p><b>Clearance</b></p> <p>Sold by: Sears</p> <table border="1"><tr><td>Regular price</td><td>\$179.99</td></tr><tr><td>Your savings</td><td>-\$100.11</td></tr></table> <p><b>\$79.88</b></p> <p>While quantities last. Intermediate markdowns may have been taken.</p> <p><b>earn 799 points</b> on this purchase</p> <p>For 02145 change location</p> <p>Eligible for <b>Free Shipping</b> From Sears Order by 5pm, get it by Sep 05</p> <p><b>FREE Store Pickup</b> Kmart Available in 5-7</p>	Regular price	\$179.99	Your savings	-\$100.11
Regular price	\$179.99					
Your savings	-\$100.11					
<p>In-store</p>	<p>Online</p>					

Conversely, a week later, Sears advertised a Nakamichi soundbar for \$199.99 in its circular with a big bonus, but online the same day it was \$100 higher with no bonus:

<p><b>\$199.99 Now</b> Plus members get <b>\$100</b> back in points**</p> <p><b>CLOSEOUT</b> Nakamichi Save \$100 Nakamichi 2.1 channel 280 Watt Bluetooth® soundbar with wireless subwoofer Was 299.99 #05731518/NK11</p>	<p>Nakamichi 2.1-Channel Sound Bar w/ Bluetooth® NK11</p> <p>★★★★☆ 16 Reviews Description Specifications</p> <p><b>2 Special offers</b> Free shipping! Orders \$59 or More</p>	<p>Sold by: Sears</p> <p><b>\$299.99</b></p> <p><b>earn \$3.00 in points</b> to use later</p> <p>For 02145 change location</p> <p>Layaway Available</p> <p>Eligible for <b>Free Shipping</b> From Sears Order by 5pm, get it by Sep 15 or <b>FREE</b> shipping with <b>MAX</b> trial</p> <p><b>FREE Store Pickup</b> Kmart Available in 4-6 days 77 Middlesex Ave Somerville, MA</p>
<p>In-store</p>	<p>Online</p>	

At Walmart, a Canon SX170 digital camera was reduced to \$139 in the store, but the same day it was only \$99 at Walmart.com:



In-store



Canon PowerShot SX170 IS

\$99<sup>00</sup>

★★★★★ (82)



Online

At Staples.com, just before Black Friday, a Dell desktop computer was advertised for \$429.99, but in the store the same computer rang up at the register for over \$600 and had to be price-matched:



Online



In-store

At Kmart, prices were not necessarily lower online. For example, in October, their retail stores had a clearance on BBQ grills, with much better prices in-store than on their website:



In-store



Kenmore 2 Burner Brown Patio Grill

★★★★★ (29)

\$107.99

[PRICE DETAILS](#)

[+Earn Points](#)

[Add To Cart](#)

Add to Compare

Pickup **FREE**

Online

At Target, Tide Pods were \$19.49 in-store but \$1.50 less at Target.com:



In-store



+ quick info

\$17.99

Tide Pods Ocean  
Mist Scent Laundry  
Detergent Pacs 72...

Tide

Online

Online prices may vary from those in-store for a variety of reasons including differences in the operations' cost structure and overhead, because a store's website may be managed by a separate division of the company, or when certain promotions are designated as "online only."

While most prices are the same online and off, according to Dworsky, there are enough instances of price disparities that it makes good sense to check both online and in-store prices before making any purchase.

Using a cellphone, it is easy to compare a retailer's Internet prices while shopping in a store. If a lower price is found online, shoppers can use either the store's price matching policy or their "order online, pick up in store" feature to snag that better price right then and there.

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**Consumer World**<sup>®</sup>, launched in 1995, is a public service, non-commercial consumer resource guide with over 2000 links to everything "consumer" on the Internet. **Edgar Dworsky**, an avid bargain hunter, is the founder of Consumer World, editor of **MousePrint.org** – an educational site devoted to exposing the fine print loopholes in advertising, and a former Assistant Attorney General in the Consumer Protection Division of the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office.