

Santa opts for gadgets, Barbie and biscuits

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Speciality products such as well-priced tablets and smartphones and digital toys will dominate Christmas sales.



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That's the word from Mark Wood, GM of the general merchandise buying division at Pick n Pay.

As newer and more affordable ranges of smart devices and tablets were developed, a new market for tech products was opening up, he said.

"Prices for smartphones and tablets have come down dramatically over the past year, with the result that the category has become much more accessible to the mass market.

"People can now buy a 3G WiFi tablet for under R1000, whereas just last year it was very difficult to offer a Wi-Fi tablet for under R1500," he said.

Adrian Naude, marketing director of Pick n Pay, said Christmas meat hampers were very popular, as were other traditional Christmas and holiday season foods such as confectionery and nuts.

Shoprite Checkers said it was difficult to predict festive season consumer spending patterns. But in the toy department, popular presents included hi-tech toys such as Zoomer robotic pets, the MIP robot, Furby Boom and the Tekno robotic range.

The Nataniël Collection, a recently launched range of premium food and homeware products, is also proving a popular

Christmas purchase.

Novelty gifts such as waffle, doughnut, candyfloss, popcorn and cupcake makers and premium coffee machines are in demand.

Outdoor toys were bolstering Makro's sales, with pedal tractor and trailers, go-karts and the classic metal wagon and metal wheelbarrow "driving" off the shelves.

Toys with a "tech tie-in" are doing well this year, coming with smart device applications or internet links. Barbie is still Miss Popular, contributing to 60% of Makro's turnover in the girls' toys category.

The Disney Princess range has also been a huge success. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are a big hit, followed by How To Train Your Dragon toys.

For toddlers, educational toys by Fisher Price, LeapFrog and WinFun remain popular. Lego is still the most sought-after construction toy.

As for the sweeter things in life, packets of Quality Streets at R55 each are selling fast. So, too, are Bakers Choice Assorted Biscuits, with Game and Makro offloading more than 150,000 boxes to customers so far.

The George Foreman Grill is still popular at R745, as is the Philips shaver for R325. Large appliances in demand include the Defy chest freezer and Samsung side-by-side fridge.

There's a big shift towards curved and smart televisions.

In the online sales universe, Kalahari is dispatching numerous copies of the books 150 Stories by Nataniël, Good Morning, Mr Mandela by Zelda la Grange, Desert God by Wilbur Smith and The Real Meal Revolution/Die Kos Revolusie by Tim Noakes.

Source: Sunday Times

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