

Tips for Shopping with Online Coupons

Shopping online with coupon codes can save bargain hunters a bundle for many online purchases from office supplies, jewelry, flowers to baby products. Do you know how online coupons work? Understand some of the basics will save bargain hunters time and money.

Coupon sites are different than merchants.

Merchants are the actual online stores that shoppers shop at. Merchants provide coupon codes to coupon sites so that coupon sites can offer coupons to shoppers who might not otherwise discover the merchant. But if you are a savvy shopper, who already knows which merchant you want to purchase a product from, you can visit a coupon website, find your merchant via "shop by store" to use a coupon for your purchase.

Where to find coupons?

If you have a specific merchant in mind, use search engines such as Google, Msn or Yahoo to search coupon sites which list merchant's coupons (e.g., Diamond.com Coupons). Once you find the coupon website you like, bookmark them or sign up their coupon alerts.

Coupons typically function as either a "hyperlink discount" or "coupon code to enter." Merchants decide how they want to offer their coupons and coupon websites simply follow the instructions of the merchants.

To activate a hyperlink discount, shoppers need to click on hyperlinks such as "Click on this link to redeem the coupon code." Shoppers are then directed to the merchant website where the discount offers will automatically apply at checkout. ShopNBC.com at CouponB.com (<http://www.couponb.com/ShopNBC.htm>) has an example of a hyperlink discount.

Other merchants may require customers to enter coupon codes when they check out. After shoppers click on the hyperlink from coupon sites, shoppers need to remember the promotion code. Designer Linens Outlet at CouponB.com (<http://www.couponb.com/Designer-Linens-Outlet.htm>) has an example. Shoppers from CouponB.com need to enter BELLA at check out to get \$20 off \$129 at Designer Linens Outlet.

Find the place to "enter coupon code".

If the discount is not automatically applied, shoppers will need to find the right place to "enter coupon code." Merchants locate this "enter coupon code" box for coupon code, promo code, discount code or whatever the merchant decides to call it in different places in their check out process.

Sometimes merchants locate the "enter coupon code" in a logical place such as the shopping cart where you can easily check if the discount is applied, but at other times it is hard to find, such as the order review page prior to confirming your purchase. Shoppers should always carefully confirm that the discount shoppers expect is properly applied.

Why coupons sometimes don't work?

Coupon codes may not work because the code could be expired or entered incorrectly. At other times, the Merchant may exclude certain products or may require minimum purchases. Some coupon codes are case sensitive.

Sometimes the coupon website is unaware that the coupon has expired, sometimes they make human errors, and sometimes the merchants change or expire coupon codes without telling the coupon websites. In any case, remember that coupon websites are providing their services to shoppers for free, so help them out by nicely emailing them and telling them that a certain coupon code doesn't work. Sometimes the coupon website can help you find a working coupon code, but at other times, the merchant may not be offering any coupon codes on the product you are interested in purchasing.

When you find a coupon code for a merchant, think of it as a bonus to save a few bucks or to splurge and spend a bit more on something else for yourself.

About the Author

CouponB.com features coupons from more than 300 merchants from jewelry, flowers, and office supplies to baby products. CouponB.com also maintains a blog at <http://couponbella.blogspot.com/> where she features deals of the week and product reviews.