

Aaron Sarfati, President and CEO of ContempoSuits.com, on Why Trump Tariffs Hurt This Year's Holiday Shopping Season

The Trump Tariffs have affected Americans in more ways than one this year including money for Christmas gifts.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Aaron Sarfati,
President and CEO of
[ContempoSuits.com](https://www.contempoSuits.com), on Why Trump-
Era Tariffs Hurt This Year's Holiday
Shopping Season



People shopping this holiday season

As the 2025 holiday shopping season wraps up, Aaron Sarfati, President and CEO of ContempoSuits.com, believes the menswear industry faced stronger headwinds than many expected. From lingering Trump-era tariffs to broader economic uncertainty, Sarfati says several factors combined to slow consumer spending during what is normally the busiest time of the year.

Tariffs and Inflation Tightened Consumer Budgets

According to Sarfati, the Trump tariffs continue to have a ripple effect across the economy, especially because so many consumer goods are imported.

"Most people don't realize how many everyday products are imported," Sarfati explains. "When tariffs increase the cost of bringing goods into the country, that cost eventually shows up as inflation for the consumer. The overwhelming majority of consumer goods are imported which has caused the prices to go up."

He notes that menswear is just one part of a much bigger picture. Clothing, electronics, household goods, and even basic necessities have all become more expensive. As a result, consumers are finding that their dollars simply do not stretch as far as they used to.

“People are earning roughly the same income,” Sarfati says, “but they’re spending more on rent, groceries, utilities, and insurance. That leaves less discretionary money for holiday gifts.”

While gasoline prices have declined and offered some relief, Sarfati says that savings at the pump were not enough to offset rising costs in other areas of daily life.

Less Discretionary Spending During the Holidays

The impact on holiday shopping was noticeable. Sarfati believes many consumers approached the season cautiously, cutting back on non-essential purchases.

“When more of your paycheck is going toward the cost of living, holiday shopping becomes stressful instead of fun,” he says. “People still want to celebrate, but they’re being far more selective about how they spend.”

This shift in mindset directly affected retail performance across the board, including online menswear sales.

Healthcare Uncertainty Added to Consumer Hesitation

In addition to tariffs and inflation, Sarfati feels that ongoing uncertainty surrounding the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, played a role in dampening consumer confidence.

“Anytime there’s uncertainty about healthcare costs, people tend to pull back,” Sarfati explains. “If consumers are unsure what their insurance premiums or coverage might look like next year, they’re less inclined to spend freely during the holidays.”

He believes this uncertainty gave shoppers “one more reason to hold onto their money” rather than spend it on gifts or wardrobe upgrades.

Black Friday and Cyber Monday Fell Short

One of the clearest indicators of a softer holiday season came during Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Sarfati reports that online sales were down double digits compared to 2024, a significant drop for an industry that has increasingly relied on e-commerce growth.

“Those two days are usually a strong barometer for how the season will go,” he says. “This year, traffic was there, but conversions were not. People were browsing more and buying less.”

Winners and Losers in Menswear Categories

Not all product categories were affected equally. Sarfati observed a clear shift in what men were

willing—or unwilling—to buy.

“Outerwear and sweaters took the biggest hit,” he notes. “Those are items people can easily delay purchasing, especially if they already have something in their closet that still works.”

Interestingly, men’s suits remained relatively steady in comparison.

“Suits are often tied to specific needs—weddings, church, special events, and work,” Sarfati explains. “Even in a tight economy, those needs don’t go away. So while discretionary categories slowed, suits held their ground.”

A Cautious Outlook Moving Forward

Looking ahead, Sarfati believes consumer behavior will remain cautious until inflation eases and economic uncertainty improves.

“The holiday season showed us that people are being very deliberate with their spending,” he says. “Tariffs, inflation, and policy uncertainty all add up, and retail feels that pressure almost immediately.”

Despite the challenges, Sarfati remains focused on adapting. “Our job is to stay flexible, understand our customers, and continue offering value,” he adds. “Even in a tough season, people still want to look good—we just have to meet them where they are.”

Final Thoughts

From tariffs driving inflation to reduced discretionary income and healthcare uncertainty, Aaron Sarfati believes multiple economic forces converged to make this year’s holiday shopping season more difficult than usual. While some categories struggled, the steady performance of men’s suits offered a reminder that necessity-driven purchases remain resilient—even when consumers are tightening their belts.

As Sarfati puts it, “This holiday season wasn’t about splurging. It was about priorities—and that tells us a lot about where the consumer mindset is right now.”

Aaron Sarfati

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