

HOW TO MAXIMIZE HOLIDAY MARKETING FOR E-COMMERCE

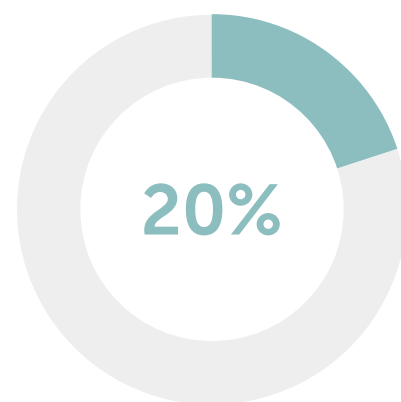
BEAT OUT THE COMPETITION AND
WIN MORE HOLIDAY SHOPPERS WITH
BETTER E-COMMERCE MARKETING

IT'S THE BIGGEST SALES OPPORTUNITY OF THE YEAR

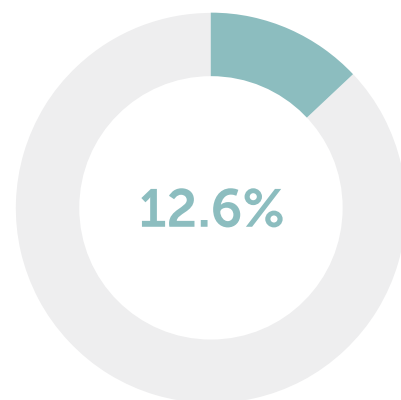
The holidays are a time of increased spending, and for you, increased profits. On these special days appreciation takes the form of clothing, electronics, and household goods – the items you sell. It may seem like a free-for-all frenzy of spending, but a consumer's spending habits are not random while shopping for holiday gifts. They are focused and directed by the marketing messages they receive. The messages that hit just the right spot with the shoppers, will be successful in their mission to draw money out of customer's wallets.

This spending frenzy, can be the make or break seasons for many retailers. The winter holiday season packs a bigger punch – this is the biggest sales opportunity of the year.

The holidays have always been a homerun when it comes to retail sales. Winter holiday sales account for 20% of all retail sales for the year. In 2014 alone, the winter holidays hauled in around 101.9 billion in sales online alone and that number is only growing. Thanksgiving and Cyber Monday sales are increasing a staggering 12.6% year over year. This huge chunk of revenue is the line separating the retailers with winning years from those with losing years. Are you claiming your steak in the holiday market? Chances are you could be doing better.



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THE COMPETITION IS STEALING YOUR THUNDER

You are no stranger to competition. With all the other companies reaching out to the same prospective buyers that you are, you have to stand out. Your competitors are stealing your clicks, opt-ins, send volume, and your customers, all of which contribute to your bottom line. As more retailers enter the online market, your customer churn increases in velocity.

The trick to fighting your competitors is also a solution for slowing down customer churn. The quality of your content sets you apart and increases customer loyalty at

the same time, not to mention, it directly affects your company's profits. Unique or fun marketing content could be the final deciding factor in purchases. The way you promote your brand during these times, can have a tremendous impact on your customer engagement. **Nearly 73% of consumer holiday purchases are influenced by promotions.** All those clicks and opt-ins that your marketing generates equate to sales.

This means that your marketing needs to be on point. Your content needs to rise above the noise and resonate with the audience more than any of your competitors. Content, above all else, is the most important factor when it comes to creating an engaging experience – 49% of marketers agree. Rich content will not only help you engage with your existing customers, but will aid in generating more leads and ultimately optimize your money making potential. However, this is not as simple as it seems. With a strong foundation of knowledge of the holiday and your audience you will be able to streamline your marketing efforts and make meaningful connections with quality leads that will buy.



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Each holiday has a different tone. Knowing these differences can help allocate marketing efforts to the most effective sources and even ease the burden of creating content by giving you a jumping off point.

While a person's behavior may be skewed depending on the celebratory principles of the day, there are some best practices that strike gold across the board.

TIME CAN MAKE YOU MONEY

You need to understand how the timeline of the holiday can help you maximize your effort and lead generating potential. Make your marketing list early so that you have time to check it twice.

Many experts suggest that planning begin four weeks ahead of the time. For the heavy hitters, (all the winter holiday) most business begin planning in August. For holidays that are not so retail-centric, like the Fourth of July, marketing the week of works the best.

TUG ON THOSE HEART STRINGS

Holidays can be a time of heightened senses. You can use these feelings to target audiences and market your brand. Each holiday may have a specific emotion associated with it. It is important to know which goes where in order to best connect with your audience. Typically, the Winter Holidays are associated with sentimental feelings and a sense of family. The Fourth of July is strongly connected to national identity. If you try to play on the human emotions most people are experiencing already, your messages will be relatable and more easily remembered.

Going against the natural feelings of a holiday could have severe consequences on a brand, but sometimes stepping outside the comfort zone has its tremendous rewards. Humor, while not usually associated directly with most holidays, has helped many brands achieve holiday marketing success. For example, British luxury retailer Mulberry used humor to boost their holiday marketing campaign above competition. Their #WinChristmas video got over one million hits in less than a month, in addition to numerous mentions from publications.

MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE

Technology is aggressively advancing and people are adapting just as quickly. With more and more people using email and shopping online, it has become a necessity to turn marketing efforts toward the world of mobile. Mobile traffic accounted for more than half of all online shopping traffic during the holidays, and is increasing every year. Shoppers expect convenience. If you do not give that to them, they simply won't give you their attention or business.



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Your online presence will likely be a determining factor in sales made or lost. **Search engines drove 41% of traffic this past season, followed by email with 8.15%.** Optimizing your website for search engines and using targeted emails to drive traffic to your site can have huge impacts on your lead generation capacity and bottom line.



41%
OF TRAFFIC



8.15%
OF TRAFFIC

AGE ISN'T JUST A NUMBER TO YOU

Knowing this information about your audience can increase your revenue and put wasteful practices to bed. The demographic you want to target will determine how you market. Millennials demand a fun, online and mobile experience, while mothers with young children need deals on toys. They respond to and engage with promotions featuring their child's favorite characters and bright colors.

DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE THE BUYER

Shoppers reward themselves more often than not. Over three-quarters of shoppers say they took advantage of retailer's promotions to buy for themselves, or a family member, a special treat. You can even utilize this in a holiday or post holiday campaign. For example, a "Didn't Get What You Wanted?" campaign.

BONUS POINTS

Time sensitive offers can do wonders to push you above the competition. By adding an expiration date, shoppers feel the pressure to act before the offer vanishes. This will limit their desire to shop around and encourage them to buy immediately. You might even be able to beat your competition to the punch with a "Buy it early sale".

Expiring in...



With the ever increasing growth of people on social media, more and more time is spent on newsfeeds. Put your content in front of their eyes for maximum exposure, and don't forget to interact with them. Old Navy has won over their fans on social media to drive holiday sales. Their #OneMillThrill campaign was a contest campaign. Customers used the hashtag to get involved, posting pictures and updates making sure they were still in the race. Open up a conversation with your customers to drive more engagement and build lifelong relationships. By giving your brand a face, or voice, you will resonate on the deepest level with your followers.

Use your type of business to your advantage by capitalizing on special days specifically designated to shopping at businesses like yours. There are lots of opportunities that certain business can take advantage of – Cyber Monday, Black Friday, and Small Business Saturday to name a few.

KEY TAKE AWAYS:

- Plan ahead. Determine the appropriate time to begin marketing in a holiday to holiday basis.
- Play off the emotions your holiday is associated, or, for a little more spice, try humor or irony. However, make sure you remain tasteful!
- Make sure your marketing efforts are optimized for mobile. If they aren't you are wasting your time and money.
- Don't be afraid to think outside the box. Radical ideas can catch on quickly and can go viral on social platforms if used correctly.
- Use social media to your advantage. Share your holiday campaigns on social platforms and engage with your audience.
- Take advantage of special days designated to the type of business you are.

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