

In-Store Traffic for the Holidays

A Step-By-Step Guide for Bringing Shoppers To Your Stores

Have you been missing valuable foot traffic lately?

Instead of simply hanging a "Holiday Sale" sign in your window, leverage this holiday shopping season to turn online searchers into in-store visitors.

Follow our step-by-step timeline to assess your progress, and determine where to go next on your local marketing journey.

Step One

Inspiration Starts Here

DO YOUR RESEARCH: What brands killed it during the holiday shopping season last year? Can those methods be adapted to your business?

Use these winning approaches as inspiration in a brainstorming session with your team and see what you're going to do to impress your customers. Focus on how you can make your brand stand out amid the noise of the holidays.

In short, get those creative juices flowing and boost excitement internally.

Pro Tips

TARGET YOUR DEMOGRAPHICS: Identify age groups and make sure your offering matches their needs. If a younger crowd is visiting one of your locations after dark, you might want to use that moment to push products or services that are relevant to them. Don't generalize! What works in one location might not work in another place. You can find key demographic insights on your SweetIQ Local Hub, or you can look directly on your audience insights pages on specific platforms like Facebook.

LET YOUR ENTIRE COMPANY KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING: this could be as simple as hosting a kick-off meeting to showcase what you're doing and why. Internal excitement is a key — yet often forgotten — piece to a successful campaign.

Step Two

Create the Master Plan

There's nothing quite as effective as an excellent to-do list! From ensuring you have the right inventory available, strategizing for the influx of shoppers and callers, building your social media decks, and planning your marketing budget, to in-store extras, ensure your entire marketing team and staff on the ground are well aware of what they need to execute for a successful holiday campaign.

This plan should run the gamut from the obvious (like updating hours on your local listings), to the finishing touches (like crafting the perfect holiday playlist.)

Pro Tips

TELL A STORY: Connect your brand to the holidays with compelling imagery that speaks to your audience. Take a note from cool campaigns like Coca Cola's "peace on Earth... at least at the Mall" campaign that humorously addresses holiday shopping stress and conveys how the product can help achieve the true holiday goal: being together with friends and family. **HINT:** Visual content gets 94% more views than just text. (Source:Forbes)

CONTEXTUALIZE LOCAL DATA AT EACH PLANNING STAGE: While knowing your demographics in each area is vital, there are very practical implications for your local data. Check your peak hours for each location on your Local Hub, and make sure you plan for extra staff ready to help customers find what they're looking for at peak moments.

Step Three

Execute, Execute, Execute.

STEP ONE, CHECK! STEP TWO, CHECK! You have your ducks in a row -- but is the plan being executed in a timely and effective way? Ensure every tactic is being tended to with care. Remember, the holiday shopping season comes and goes faster than you can say "blowout sale", so you need to be on-point from start to finish.

The execution stage will be highly reliant on a project roadmap, internal and external alignment, leadership and accountability. Appoint a project manager for the entire campaign, and ensure there is internal visibility of every campaign piece that's being released, and when.

Pro Tips

HAVING PROMOS, COUPONS AND INTEGRATIONS that can assist your sales ensures you have a constant flow of ready-to-buy customers. Use your local listings to launch these campaigns and see — not only customers walking into your locations — but a ton of data you can analyze in your post-mortem. For example, if your store is off the beaten path, offer Uber and Lyft integrations that incentivize traffic towards your store.

HAVE WEEKLY TOUCH-BASE MEETINGS WITH YOUR TEAM LEADS: If you're working in sprints for your campaigns, weekly meetings ensure that each team member is getting the assets and approvals to push their campaign task forward. It's also vital to have a liaison from head office to store managers to ensure campaign items are being executed on the ground, too.

Step Four

Make the Data Work for You

ASK YOURSELF THIS: Are you doing everything you can to get rich analytics about consumer behaviors? If the answer is yes, then you need to ensure you're creating highly targeted and carefully curated experiences for each customer. If the answer is no, get shopping for analytics platforms STAT!

Pro Tips

DOUBLE-DOWN ON YOUR HIGH-TRAFFIC DAYS, ONLINE AND IN-STORE: Identify which day of the week is your busiest at each location, and deploy your local campaign right at the busiest time. Are Saturdays busy at your Houston location? Time to make a holiday splash! When you have your campaigns tailor-made to high traffic times at each location, you'll maximize clicks-to-action. Track consequently!

REACH OUT TO YOUR MOST LOYAL AUDIENCE: Target recurring visitors on your website and run a review campaign. Customers who visit your social sites and website more often are more likely to leave you a review hence their engagement with your brand. On the local level, target locations with low review volume to boost customer feedback in certain areas.

Step Five

Put on the Finishing Touches!

You know that amazing brainstorm session you had back in the summer? This is when all of those great ideas can come to fruition. Transform your store or restaurant into a true Holiday sanctuary - bound to impress even the Scrooges. Determine what you're going to do to make your store alluring, exciting and yes...enjoyable!

Pro Tips

PROVIDE SOMETHING FREE FOR IN-STORE VISITORS: This could be something as simple as hot cocoa or holiday candy. Advertise your giveaway items on your social networks.

ENCOURAGE IN-STORE SOCIAL SHARING WITH PHOTO-WORTHY MOMENTS

IN-STORE: How about a Holiday-themed SnapChat Geofilter? When you make your store as beautiful as Buddy the Elf's masterpiece at Gimbles in New York City, you give your customers plenty of reasons to share their location on social networks.

LEVERAGE YOUR HOLIDAY DISCOUNT COUPONS FOR ALL YOUR LOCAL LISTINGS: During the holidays, customers are on the hunt for deals. Make sure your discounts are available everywhere they are searching for them! In fact, consider offering promos targeting key demographics on the sites and directories they use the most.

Step Six

Examine, Assess & Improve

TIME FOR A POST-MORTEM! See what aspects of your holiday campaign succeeded, and capitalize on that momentum for growth into 2018.

Next up, see where you could have improved: digital or in-store? Planning or execution? Have a solid understanding of your success so you can blast into 2018 stronger than ever.

Pro Tip

MONITOR YOUR ENTIRE HOLIDAY SEASON: Track, track, track! It's a good idea to keep an eye on all your local metrics during your business' busiest time. Your post-mortem will let you know which locations need improvement and you will be better prepared for the next season.