

Whitepaper

Holiday Marketing Strategies



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Executive Summary

The Holiday season is a marketing playground. There are many different strategies marketers can use to generate revenue and increase profits. By the time the Holiday season comes around it is ideal to have a marketing campaign that is fully developed and ready to be implemented. Swiftpage is here to provide assistance in preparing and executing a successful marketing campaign during the Holidays. The following whitepaper will provide suggestions about useful holiday marketing strategies that will develop brand equity, increase sales and build a larger customer base. First, some Holiday season facts and figures are provided to show you the importance and growth of different marketing channels such as online marketing, social media marketing and mobile marketing. After that, you will be presented with some significant dates that are critical to your marketing campaign during the holidays. To further prepare you for the holidays, there are sections about contact management, email design and some holiday marketing mistakes to avoid. Next, you will find information regarding marketing strategies in the areas of social media, mobile marketing, paid search marketing and search engine optimization, automated marketing and the importance of integrating across different marketing channels. Finally, your holiday marketing efforts do not conclude the minute the holidays are over. There are some notable steps and procedures to take to ensure success in the New Year.

1. Holiday Season Facts and Figures

- Consumers are starting their holiday shopping earlier in the holiday season. In 2011, 39% of consumers revealed that they had already started their shopping before Thanksgiving Day ([Source](#)). Don't wait till the last minute to develop a marketing campaign this Holiday season.
- Retailers in 2011 sent 34% more promotional emails between December 18 and December 22 compared to the same time period in 2010 ([Source](#)). Consequently, email marketing should be a major part of your holiday marketing campaign. Constructing attractive emails with relevant subject lines is imperative.
- Consumers spent \$35.3 billion online from November 1, 2011 to December 26, 2011 which is an increase of 15% from the same time period in 2010 ([Source](#)).
- Online retailers are often offering better deals than in-store retailers. Mainly for this reason, 70% of holiday shoppers said they made purchases online rather than at physical locations ([Source](#)). As a result retailers are using QR codes to keep consumers more informed about products and to deliver promotions directly to their mobile devices while at the physical locations.
- In 2011, 42% of holiday shoppers said they planned on making purchases from catalogs and other direct marketers, up from 26% the year before ([Source](#)). This shows that traditional marketing has not been completely replaced by online marketing. Integrate your marketing efforts so that online and traditional marketing are complimentary to each other.





- Online shoppers in the United States alone spent \$202 billion in 2011 and the number is expected to increase 62% to \$327 billion by 2016 ([Source](#)). The growth in online sales can be attributed to improved websites, increased online communication through email and social media and the increased popularity of mobile devices.
- 14.5% of Amazon.com's traffic on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, came from social sites, an increase of 9.0% from 2010 ([Source](#)). Many online retailers have seen a large increase in website traffic via social media sites. Social media is increasingly becoming more valuable for marketers.
- Boxing Day sales, the day after Christmas, were \$7.1 billion in 2011, 11.3% of which were made through mobile devices. In 2010, only 4.3% of sales were made through a mobile device ([Source](#)). Consumers are using their mobile devices more and more and that number is expected to grow even further. There are three things that consumers do on their mobile phones that stand out to marketers; compare prices, check product availability in-store and online and find store locations.
- Black Friday sales in 2011 were \$11.4 billion, \$816 million of which were online. That was a 6.6% increase overall, and a 26% increase online ([Source](#)).

2. Important Holiday Season Dates

- **Halloween:** This spooky holiday marks the beginning of the Holiday season and is a great time to interact with your audience. Set them up for future communications during the Holiday season by telling them what to expect from you. Encourage your contacts to follow you on your social media sites and give them an incentive to sign up to receive your email communications if they don't already.
- **Thanksgiving:** Thanksgiving is the last day before the busiest shopping day of the year. Some believe Thanksgiving Day is now the start of the holiday shopping season rather than Black Friday. In 2011, online spending on Thanksgiving was up 18% from 2010 ([Source](#)). Consider starting promotions a day early to catch those Thanksgiving Day shoppers. At the very least, don't forget to send a last minute reminder of any promotions or to just keep your brand fresh in the consumer's mind.
- **Black Friday:** Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, should be on your calendar as one of the most prominent days of the Holiday season. Black Friday is regarded as the busiest shopping day of the year; not necessarily because of the dollars consumers are spending, but because of the hordes of people that are doing their holiday shopping and looking for a steal of a deal. Since consumers will be receiving a multitude of emails in the days leading up to Black Friday, consider sending emails earlier than normal, but not too early. We suggest starting your email campaign no earlier than Halloween. You want to establish yourself in their minds before the competition, but don't want them forgetting about you because you started your campaign prematurely.
- **Cyber Monday:** Cyber Monday is the Monday after Thanksgiving. Historically, Black Friday has been by far the busiest shopping day of the year, however, Cyber Monday has grown exponentially in the last few years. Last year Cyber Monday broke the record for online sales in a single day exceeding \$1.25 billion. This was a massive 22% increase from the year before ([Source](#)). Together Black Friday and Cyber Monday have made email central to holiday marketing efforts each and every year.



- **Green Monday:** The second Monday in December, Green Monday was originally coined by eBay to represent their busiest sales day in December. It is now recognized by most retail chains as an especially busy date during the Holidays. By this point you're probably thinking, "Wow, why don't they just give a nickname to every day of the Holiday season to represent a busy shopping day?" Seems about right, but these days have historically, especially in recent years, shown higher than average numbers. Green Monday had online sales of \$1.13 billion, 19% more than 2010 ([Source](#)).
- **Free Shipping Day:** This day has a website dedicated to it (<http://www.freeshippingday.com>) and is usually held in mid-December, about a week in advance of Christmas. Free shipping day saw an increase of 14% in online sales from 2010 to \$1.07 billion ([Source](#)). If you can participate with free shipping on this day, do it.
- **Super Saturday:** Super Saturday is the last Saturday before Christmas and a prime time for all the holiday shopping procrastinators out there. Believe us, there are a lot of them. Capitalize by tweaking your message to target these late shoppers. For example, you could encourage online shoppers to make a purchase by guaranteeing delivery before Christmas. 
- **Hanukkah:** The first day of Hanukkah is another wonderful day to continue your marketing campaign. The date changes each year so be sure to confirm the dates. Think about offering a new promotion on each of the eight days. If that seems like too much, space out a few promotions over the eight days so you stay fresh in shopper's minds.
- **Avoid Christmas Eve and Christmas Day:** While it has become acceptable to send emails on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas is traditionally viewed as a time to relax and spend time with family. Most people are not even checking their email and if they are they don't want to be bombarded with more email offers for the holidays. If you want to remind people about Boxing Day sales, send them a couple days in advance of Christmas.
- **Boxing Day (The day after Christmas):** The day after Christmas is a highly popular day for shopping as well. Less than 24 hours after insisting they love their gifts, many consumers flock to the store to return them for something more desirable. Have a return policy in place that makes the interaction smooth and quick for the consumer. Whatever the reason for returning their gift, a smooth process will leave the consumer with a pleasant association with your brand. Another reason consumers may flood to stores is to acquire accessories for the gift they received. For this reason most retailers have post-holiday sales. Take advantage of this time to cross-sell and upsell products and to remind consumers to redeem holiday gift cards. The Holiday season is far from over. Staying on top of your marketing communications is critical to ending the year on a high note and to forming relationships that you can build upon in the New Year. 

For more information on communicating with your contacts on the most essential dates throughout the Holiday season, see the Automated Marketing section of this whitepaper.

3. Contact Management

Clean Your Email List

Before the holidays season kicks off, there are a few things you must do with your contact list to be prosperous. First things first, let's clean up that list. Go through your unsent reports to see what emails have repeatedly bounced, which contacts have opted-out, which emails have continuously failed delivery and identify duplicates. These emails should be removed from your holiday list as they will serve no purpose and make it more difficult to interpret results. Inactive customers, or customers that have not opened your emails in a while, should remain on the list as but moved to a different segment. Determining what contacts are inactive depends on the sales cycle of your business. For example, a car company is going to have a longer sales cycle than an office supply store.

Segment Your List

Now that your email list is clean, you need to segment your audience. If you sell the same product or service to the same set of customers year round, segmenting by product is not pivotal. However, if you sell a number of different products to different people, you have seasonal products, or your contact list is continually growing and changing, segmenting is much more crucial. Group your list based on how you will set up different email campaigns. Create groups based on frequency of interaction with your emails. This way you will separate weak leads from strong leads and develop appropriate campaigns catered to each.

Show Customer Appreciation

Show loyal customers you appreciate their business by sending them a thank you card. Each year at the beginning of the Holiday season send a hand signed post card wishing them a happy Holiday season. Also, include some sort of gift or savings offer. Entering the Holiday season, this will leave your business at the forefront of consumers' minds. Then, hit them with your email campaign to promote repeat purchases. Also, the Holiday season is a great time to reconnect with customers that you haven't talked to in a while. Maybe a recent email was buried in their inbox and just need a friendly reminder.

4. Email Design During the Holiday Season

The Holiday season brings a different feel than the rest of the year. The weather is changing, the land is transforming, and sugar plums are beginning to dance in consumer's heads. The design of your emails should embrace this change while staying consistent with your established brand identity. In the following paragraphs we will share some pointers on how to design your emails for successful holiday marketing campaigns.

Create Unique Subject Lines

With so many emails flooding inboxes, subject lines should stand out and be unique. Sign up to receive emails from the competition. Then you will know what subject lines they are using and what content is contained within their emails. Test different subject lines among segments to see what works best. As email traffic increases during the holiday, subject lines will need more and more attention.

Include Company Name

An unfamiliar email is an unopened email. Be sure that your company name is included in the subject line *if* it is not already set as the 'From' name. Without being able to recognize immediately where the email is coming from, consumers may skip over your email without thinking twice.

Have Concise Subject Lines

Additionally, your subject lines need to be short and to the point. Make an attempt to have subject lines center around the closest upcoming holiday. Another thing to consider is including all or part of your call to action within the subject line. Your recipients will immediately know exactly what the objective of the email is and what they are being called on to do.

Place Beneficial Content in Appropriate Places

While the subject line is the most important part of your email during the Holiday season the content contained in the body should not be overlooked. Once you have gotten the recipient to open your email, you must quickly pique their interest. The most beneficial information should be above the fold including the complete call to action. Above the fold is the portion of your email that is seen immediately upon opening before any scrolling is done and is where recipients spend 80% of their time. If you have a promotion you really want recipients to see, such as 20% off a \$50 or more purchase, make that one of the first things they see.

Be Aware of Spam Words

One of the biggest reasons holiday campaigns fail is because of Spam. Before constructing the subject line and body of your emails, research the latest Spam words. Once you have created your emails, send them through a Spam checker to weed out any unwanted words you missed that have the possibility of triggering the Spam filter. Doing this will ensure the greatest deliverability. Some common spam words are included in the table below.

Additional Income	Buy or Buy Direct	Meet Singles	Earn \$ or Earn Cash
Affordable	Cash	Best Price	Discount
Free or F R E E	Money or \$\$\$	Why pay more?	Chance
Avoid	Freedom	Home	Wife
Problem	Satisfaction	Increase sales	Giving Away
Urgent	Limited time	Get started now	Instant or Now

Embrace the Holidays

Get in the holiday spirit. Don't just use the same template that you have used all year or the same holiday campaign as last year. The holidays are all around you; when you are driving through the streets, when you are surfing the web, when you are watching TV, the music on the radio, and even the clothing you see. Everyone is embracing the Holiday season. Nobody likes a Scrooge.

5. Holiday Email Marketing Mistakes

Email marketing is a great way to drive traffic to your website, ultimately generating revenue and increasing your bottom line. However, the opposite can be true if you make the mistakes listed next.

Here are the most common email marketing mistakes made during the Holiday season.

- **Having the same holiday email marketing campaign every year:** Get creative with your holiday campaign. Even though what you did last year may have been a huge success, your recipients want new and interesting content. Look back at what has worked in the past and tweak your campaign to look and feel fresh and exciting.
- **Thinking that everyone celebrates the same holidays:** Make an attempt to find out what holidays your recipients celebrate before sending out a bunch of emails that countdown the days until Christmas. With populations around the world becoming more and more diverse, you must be aware of what holidays recipients are celebrating. Knowing this information will allow you to form a more well-rounded campaign appropriately targeting each recipient. If you are unable to segment your list based on what holidays a recipient celebrates, avoid mentioning specific holidays within your emails. Instead use a general term like “Happy Holidays”, “Seasons Greetings”, or “Warmest thoughts and best wishes for a wonderful holiday and a very Happy New Year”.
- **Waiting till the last minute:** Waiting until the last minute will set your campaign up for failure. You will be left in a hurry to get your emails out, leaving no time to test subject, deliverability and links. Plan for the holiday marketing season far in advance.
- **Carrying out a holiday email marketing campaign without a strategy:** Every email campaign should be formed in accordance with an established objective or strategy. Holiday campaigns are no different. Too many email marketers feel the need to throw a couple emails together, call it a campaign and hope to get noticed. Form a campaign centered on reaching established goals and objectives. Some objective examples are: increased web traffic, increased conversions, customer retention and specific product purchase.
- **Making every email sound like a sales pitch:** During the Holiday season nearly every email a consumer receives is essentially a sales pitch. Let your product benefits speak for themselves by giving your recipients information about the benefits they will receive instead of just listing the product features. Your recipients will appreciate being treated like valued customers rather than just another customer contributing solely to the bottom line.
- **Overloading contacts with emails:** While it is acceptable to increase the frequency of your emails during the Holiday season, don't go overboard. Overwhelming your recipients may lead them to unsubscribe instead of buy. Find a good medium to keep customer interest as high as possible. Too many or too few emails is a quick way to decrease customer interest. As a general rule of thumb, try not to send more than two emails per week during the Holiday season.



- **Developing branding that is inconsistent:** Make sure the emails you are sending out are still consistently branded with other marketing materials including colors, fonts and logos. Brand identity is one of the strongest forces in marketing and changing how your holiday email campaigns are branded would be a mistake. If loyal customers cannot identify who you are, they may take their business elsewhere.
- **Not listing the same sender for all emails:** How are your recipients supposed to make a buy decision when they can't even make the decision whether to open your email or not? Include either your company name or the name of a familiar individual within your company and stick with the same name throughout your campaign.
- **Leaving vital information below the fold:** During the Holiday season, the amount of time you have to attract a recipient decreases. At any other time of the year you have 3 seconds to spark someone's interest. During the holidays, you have 2 seconds at most. Above the fold signifies the area of the email that appears immediately after opening an email without scrolling. Most of your contacts' time, if not all of it, will be spent up here. Therefore, the most advantageous content of your email should go here, including your call to action. Clearly spell out what action you want them to take.
- **Failing to make links obvious:** Make sure that you include obvious links within your campaign. The universal way to do this is by making linked text blue and underlined or by using a button image. However you choose to include links, whether you use text or image links, make sure they are obvious and stand out from the rest of your content.
- **Not testing emails before sending:** Before sending out your emails, test to make sure links are sending recipients to the correct landing page. Recipients who are taken to an unexpected landing page where they have to search for what they were looking for are not likely to continue opening your emails. Moreover, test the overall appearance and scannability of your emails on different email service providers and devices.
- **Not integrating email marketing with all other marketing efforts:** Be sure that your holiday email marketing campaign is aligned with your other marketing efforts. Within your emails encourage recipients to visit your social media profiles by including links. Also, contact recipients that have not opened your emails by direct mail. These are just a couple of suggestions on how to integrate your holiday marketing campaign with other marketing channels. There are many more possibilities so get creative. For instance, strategically locate a sign at your physical location with a promotional code for an exclusive discount when customers visit your website.
- **Improperly targeting your audience:** If you are sending messages that don't speak directly to the recipients preferences, nothing good can come from your email campaign. Recipients may ignore your first email thinking you sent them a poorly targeted email by mistake. However, if they continue you will start to see more opt-outs.
- **Failing to stand out:** Stay on top of what the competition is doing. Create better offers, more attractive emails and segment well.



6. Marketing Execution During The Holiday Season

Social Media

Social media has become one of the most efficient and far reaching marketing methods, and up front, it's free! If you have not yet set up any social media profiles, do it before the Holiday season arrives. It is highly likely that your contacts are involved with at least one of the major social networking sites: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. However, be sure to create a page and familiarize yourself with any other social media networks that your target audience may be a part of.



Another up and coming social media site that could be particularly useful during the holidays is Pinterest. Only in its second season, Pinterest, a virtual scrapbooking site, has already gathered around 20 million users. Shoppers are ten percent more likely to make a purchase decision here than any other visitors via other social media sites. A new trend that occurred in the 2011 Holiday season involved Pinterest users "pinning" their wish lists to the site. How perfect? Knowing what consumers want is half the battle. Facebook is currently testing a similar "wish list" type function for its users. While you should utilize all the popular social media sites, Pinterest just may be the best for the Holiday season. Check it out.

If you are wondering what kind of content to post to your social media profiles during the Holiday season, here are a few tips and tricks that will help:

- Contests are always a good way to get customers involved with your social media profiles. Ask followers to post their best Halloween outfits or pumpkin carvings, test users on different holiday trivia, tell contestants to send in their best snowman/snow angel (if audience is in a colder climate where snow is likely), etc. In every instance try to relate the contest back to your company. Also be sure to send prizes to winners.
- Include links to your website. You always want to drive more traffic to your website whenever you get the chance.
- Share what your company has done in the community over the Holiday season and encourage followers to share their stories. Maybe you served a Thanksgiving meal to people in need or gave toys to underprivileged children. Consumers enjoy doing business with socially responsible companies.
- Post pictures of any events that your business is holding throughout the Holiday season such as Halloween parties, Thanksgiving football games, Christmas and New Year's Eve parties, product showcases, etc. The main goal here is to highlight your company culture and relate to consumers to build relationships.
- Use social media with traditional marketing (see Integrating Marketing Efforts on page 9).
- Post YouTube videos on your other social media sites. Not only will you get more views on a particular video, but interested consumers will likely end up searching for additional videos about your company.


Mobile Marketing

Many people these days rely on the functionality of their smartphones and tablets to live their everyday lives. This mobile movement has provoked marketers to develop mobile friendly websites, email marketing communications and apps. Consumers expect you to be rooted in mobile marketing and failing to optimize your marketing efforts for mobile devices before the holidays will result in lost connections and sales.

Focus on designing mobile marketing campaigns that are concise. Worry about satisfying them now and it will be much easier to continue to build a relationship after the Holiday season. Do make sure that your company name is contained in the subject line or from line so when they receive emails they will easily identify who they are from, making it easier to form a strong relationship.

On mobile devices consumers are looking for a quick and easy experience. Consider including some or part of your call to action in the subject line. With so many emails in their inbox, it is likely that your subject line is the only thing they will see. Also, make it easy for consumers to follow links whether they are text or image links. Cluttered or small links make it hard for recipients to follow, and the last thing you want to do is frustrate them. Similarly, be certain that you do not have any broken links. This will leave consumers questioning your reputation and once again will frustrate them. Finally, make image and text links pop out so consumers know exactly where they need to click to take action.

A couple quick tips for mobile marketing:

- Contemplate developing a mobile application for your product or service. Do this only if it adds value and you predict a clear increase in traffic and revenue.
- Make sure all links are images are easy to click on with a finger tip. 
- Using QR codes that consumers can scan to get more information about certain products is a trend that you may want to take advantage of. Companies wanted to increase customer product knowledge and interest while at their physical location. With QR codes, customer can scan a code with their phone and receive additional product information immediately. This urges customers to buy while in-store rather than going home and buying for a cheaper price online. For a good article about QR codes go [here](#).

Paid Search Marketing and Search Engine Optimization

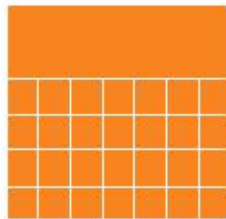
Another beneficial marketing channel is paid search marketing. Paid search marketing is a great way to increase website traffic and drive sales by purchasing advertisement space on search engines. You may have heard of paid search marketing as cost-per-click (CPC) or pay-per-click (PPC) marketing as most are sold in these ways. It should not to be confused with search engine optimization (SEO) or the comprehensive term of search engine marketing (SEM). Search engine optimization (SEO) is similar to paid search marketing in that it involves improving the visibility of your business in search engine results. For SEO, visibility is improved by constructing on-page content that can be easily classified by search engines to better rank search engine results. Paid search marketing allows companies to bid on different keywords they would like to correspond with their advertisement. When clicked they pay a certain amount on a per click basis. Both of these marketing methods improve the visibility of your website.

Benefits of Paid Search Marketing and Search Engine Optimization

As discussed, everyone is trying to capture the attention of consumers in a finite amount of time. When consumers use search engines to browse for products and services they want it to be quick and painless. Consumers will usually only look at the first page of search results and most will only click on the first few links. To increase your visibility, use PPC and SEO techniques. You will see an increase in traffic to your website potentially leading to a significant boost in sales. If you are already using these marketing methods, think about increasing your keyword budget during the Holiday season.

Automated Marketing

During the Holiday season things can get quite busy. The last thing you want to deal with is sending out the next email of your marketing campaign, but if you don't it could ruin your entire campaign. That's where automated marketing comes in handy. There are numerous ways automated marketing can help your business throughout the year, but especially during the Holiday season.



Automated marketing is a type of nurturing that allows you to connect with your recipients at optimal points in time in order to build a relationship. In relation to the Holiday season, those optimal points in time are more than likely going to fall on the dates discussed earlier (refer back to the Important Dates section). Instead of having to create and send an email on each of those suggested days, design and schedule a marketing campaign now and when the time comes you will be able to concentrate on other aspects of your business. Just remember the appropriate design guidelines mentioned previously.

So how can marketing automation help you this Holiday season?

- Allows you to keep up with both warm and cold leads consistently and effectively.
- Integrates online and offline sales and marketing efforts.
- Removes repetitive manual tasks. Instead of having to construct an email every time you want to send one out, you can set up an automated campaign specific to your desired settings, which will do the work for you.
- Produces a consistent system from which you can analyze and improve upon. Evaluate past holiday automated marketing campaigns and improve upon them each Holiday season.
- Allows you to adapt to what prospects have done by filtering their actions and delivering an appropriate message as a result.

Non-Retail Holiday Marketing

Everybody knows that the Holiday season and retail go hand in hand. However, the Holiday season can be a time for non-retail businesses to join in on the holiday spirit as well. Anybody can use social media whether you're representing yourself or your business. At the very least, if you are just posting messages on your social media sites, you will still be in the minds of customers. Furthermore, don't be fooled into thinking that everything discussed in this whitepaper is just for retailers. Any of the marketing strategies discussed can be performed with a little adjustment towards your marketing niche. The following is a list of other ideas non-retail businesses can do for marketing during the holidays.

- Send out holiday cards thanking loyal customers. Also, offer some sort of reward for referring new customers.
- Send out a holiday/year end newsletter. Within the newsletter discuss topics such as recap of the year and any achievements that were made, any new endeavors that will be taking place in the New Year, and/or a heartwarming story about how you helped a client.



- Focus on your specific niche and provide some help or suggestions during the Holiday season. For example, if you're a physical trainer provide tips on how to stay healthy during the holidays; if you run a landscaping company, give suggestions on what customers can do for their landscape during the colder months; if you're a dentist, let customers know what foods to stay away from to protect their teeth. The key is to focus on your specific industry and figure out what customers would like to hear from you during the holidays.

Integrating Marketing Efforts

Ideally, every business would integrate their marketing efforts across every marketing channel possible. Unfortunately, there are restraints on time, money and resources. For this reason not all marketing channels are appropriate for every business. It is necessary to determine where your target market interacts with your marketing communications the most and do the best job of utilizing as many channels as possible to bring your messages to where they exist. One such marketing channel that in recent years has received the most attention by marketers is social media. With the reach, cost effectiveness and timeliness of social media it is tempting to think that it, along with other online marketing forms, is replacing traditional forms of marketing. This is definitely not the case. While online marketing may have surpassed traditional marketing as the preferred method, traditional marketing should not be overlooked. In fact, online marketing should be viewed as just another set of tools in the massive marketing tool box. Online marketing should be used as a compliment to, and not a replacement of, traditional marketing.

Follow these easy tips and tricks to have a successful Holiday season:

- Put your email, website, and social media information on anything that you will be sending or handing out including any catalogs, brochures, coupons, business cards, menus, etc.
- Include a small section in your next advertisement; whether it is a billboard, phonebook, radio, or TV advertisement to inform consumers of your social media presence. Be clear that you will have some special offers only available through your social media sites.
- Use direct mail to send out a postcard encouraging recipients to visit your online website and social media sites where they can sign up to receive your newsletter. Explain to them that email communications are a great way to receive exclusive holiday savings and offers.
- Use your physical location to promote your website. Drive consumers to your website by including your web address on your windows or a sign. Also, include some sort of display within your business location to encourage repeat purchases during and after the Holiday season.

All of the previously listed suggestions are meant to ultimately drive more consumers to make a purchase decision, thereby increasing revenue generation. These tips will help you to develop strong relationships leading to higher brand equity. These tips can be fine-tuned for success during the Holiday season no matter what your business; size and industry are irrelevant.

7. Post-Holiday Season

So the holiday boom has come and gone, now what? Many business experience a drastic downturn in email opens and clicks, social media interaction, website traffic, and ultimately sales. It makes sense that people are likely burnt out from all the stress the holidays bring, from buying gifts, making meals for an entire family, to drinking a little too much eggnog. There is also another more studied reason of why businesses experience a downturn after the holidays. Researchers have concluded that many consumers have been conditioned to only buy when they are going to receive some sort of promotion or discount. Most holiday marketers are guilty of this, however, the decline is not inevitable and things can be done to stay on the upswing.

First of all, if you follow our suggestions to this point and stay on top of your marketing efforts you will be in great shape. You will know which of your customers are most valuable, which customers need a warm welcoming, and which customers need more attention. After the Holiday season is when you must focus on follow-up and retention. The following are some ways to retain customers and start out the New Year with a bang.

- Send a thank you letter, wishing customers a happy year to come and including social media links in the email.
- Give customers a reward for referring new customers. This is a great way to increase traffic to your website as people place a lot of trust in family and friends.
- Another incentive based way to increase website traffic is by encouraging customers to fill out a product review form and offering a reward upon completion.
- Also, based on what they have purchased, include a list of accessories or other products they may be interested in.
- Advertising companies are also more than aware that the beginning of the year is slower than normal. Therefore many offer a discount to companies wishing to do advertising. Keep an eye out for discounted advertising possibilities and capitalize on the ones that reach your target audience.
- Review email reports of your holiday email marketing campaign soon after the Holiday season is over while they are fresh in your mind. Don't wait to try and review the reports when preparing for next year's Holiday season. Reviewing the reports will allow you to qualify who is most interested and follow up with the most imperative leads quickly. What is more, you can use your conclusions to brainstorm changes and new options for next year's holiday marketing.

Conclusion

There are numerous ways to go about designing and implementing a holiday marketing campaign and it is critical that you make yours unique to your brand. By using the strategies put forth in this whitepaper, we are certain that your Holiday season will be prosperous this year and for years to come. Good luck and happy holidays.