



# HOLIDAY CHECKLIST

## ARE YOU HOLIDAY READY?

If you haven't put your holiday marketing campaigns in place, don't worry. We can help. This simple checklist will walk you through all the things you should be working on to have your best holiday season ever.

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## START WITH GOALS

If you are like many business owners, the holiday season represents a significant portion of your annual revenue. Start the season with a clear revenue target to use as a starting point to establish your marketing budget.

Be realistic, but ambitious. You should always aim for an increase, but too large a goal may lead you to overspending. Set up both seasonal and monthly goals. Measure your progress and adjust your strategies each month in response to results.

### ☐ Holiday Sales Goals

## SET YOUR BUDGET

There are lots of budgeting methods you can use, but the simplest and most straightforward is the percent of sales. Essentially, you look at your revenue goal and set aside a fixed percent for marketing and advertising.

**Moderate spending 2% – 5% of sales** – This is appropriate if you are expecting stable growth over last year or you have a well-established customer base. Your marketing budget will be focused primarily on reminding customers to come back.

**Aggressive spending 7% - 10% of sales** – If you are launching a new product, service or company, or expanding into a new market, a higher level of investment will be required to break through the clutter.

### ☐ Holiday Budget

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## ASSESS THE MARKET

Start with competitive research. What did your competitors do last year? What do you think they will do this year? Do they appear to be scaling up or cutting back? Do not base your entire strategy on their actions, but pay attention to what they are focusing on, and look for ways to carve out a unique niche for your business.

Social media monitoring tools can help you track their activity or you can go old school, tearing out newspaper ads and watching and recording their investments in television and radio.

### ☐ Identify Three Competitors to Watch

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- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

### NOTES:

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## MAKE YOUR WEBSITE HOLIDAY READY

**Optimize product pages** by review page titles, Meta descriptions and page copy to include relevant key words. Optimize the images as well. Remember using ALT text will increase the chances your page will rank for image searches.

**Create new pages for “hot” products** – These pages don’t have to appear in your primary navigation but can be used as landing pages for AdWords and email campaigns. Use phrase like “top gifts” or most “popular gifts” in the titles and page copy to attract visitors.

### ☐ Holiday SEO Plan

What do you want people to do when they come to your website this holiday season? Make sure your calls to action (CTA) are clear and visible on every page on your website. This is not a time to be shy.

### ☐ Holiday Calls to Action

According to <http://www.comscore.com>, mobile represented 21% all eCommerce sales during the holiday season in 2016. That number is expected to grow this year. With the growth of mobile, it is more important than ever that your website is mobile responsive, with concise and easy to ready content. Define a clear path to product and service pages, use CTA to move visitors through your site. Keep checkout process simple and secure.

### ☐ Optimize Mobile Experience

#### Holiday Website Changes

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

## CREATE HOLIDAY CONTENT

Content fuels your marketing all year long, but it is exceptionally important during the holiday season. Unfortunately, just as you need more content you have less time to create it. So start now! You are going to need graphics, photos, blog posts, and social media updates. You may also want to consider videos, podcasts and downloads such as checklists like this one.

There is no need to reinvent the wheel every year. Go back through your files, and look at what you have used in the past. Images, blog posts, and videos can all be reused with little or no updating. Also, roundup blog posts linking to older content is a win-win: you save time, but still have something of value for your audience. Also, driving traffic to the old posts can help your SEO authority score.

### ☐ Audit What You Have

**Customers expect offers and promotions** but you don't have to run them all season long. Brainstorm a list of promotions. Look back over what worked best last year. Use this information to develop a schedule that will allow you to test several different offers early in the season.

**Now you are ready to create graphics for in-store signage, email and social media.**

### ☐ Develop Promotion Schedule

**Create graphics** to use be used throughout the holiday season. Creating an entire series at once will save you lots of time later. Make a list of all the places you might use the images including: headers for blog posts, social shares and images for ads, email graphics and images for print.

Everyone is going to be using images this holiday season, so look for unique images on stock photography sites. Yes, you will pay a bit more but it will be worth it. Better yet, take a few images of your own.

### ☐ Create Holiday Graphics

**Blog posts** drive content all year long. Interesting, informative content will be even more valuable content that saves them time and money this time of year. Take the time to brainstorm a list of possible topics, create a content calendar and start writing. You can schedule the posts throughout the holiday season.

## Create Content

Social media lets you take your message where your customers are. That doesn't mean you have to be everywhere. Be strategic and select the best platforms and begin scheduling content.

Once you know what your promotions will be and when they will run, you can begin scheduling information to appear in your timeline. Take advantage of scheduling options on each of the social media platforms or use tools like Hootsuite or CoSchedule to map out an entire week or month.

Just remember your holiday social media should be a mixture of planned and spontaneous content, so leave room in your schedule for a few holiday fun messages.

## Schedule Social Media

**Email** is a great way to stay in touch with your customers throughout the season. As you are planning your blogs, create corresponding email campaigns. Use your graphics to add a bit of punch to the email.

If you are going to add an offer to the campaign, you may want to leave the email in draft until you are ready to send it because things may change, and you may want to modify your offer.

## Draft Your Emails

### CONTENT NOTES:

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## ADVERTISING

Facebook, Twitter, Google Adwords, which is right for you? We actually have an [entire white paper dedicated](#) to that topic so I won't cover the information here. But you should plan on investing some money in advertising. The days of free social media exposure are behind us. It is "pay to play" all year long, but especially during the holidays.

Use your promotional schedule as a guide, plan out your advertising campaign graphics, timelines and budgets. And whichever advertising tools you choose, remember to add campaign maximums to control costs, and stop dates to match the end of your promotion.

### ☐ Set Up Advertising Plan

#### Other Notes

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## GET STARTED TODAY

The ball is in your court. The holiday season is right around the corner, so use this checklist as a guide to keep you on track in the busy weeks ahead. And if you need help, feel free to reach out!

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