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Ebook

Global holiday marketing guide

How to deliver winning campaigns worldwide



Why is holiday marketing important



When talking about global digital marketing strategy, not all months are created equal. The holiday season can be the land of opportunities for marketers, whether they're looking to increase brand awareness in different regions, drive sales, or strengthen the connection with their customers.

In the B2C world, the potential is unequivocal, with consumers relying more and more on digital channels to get them through the chaotic shopping season. However, in the B2B space, it may be more difficult to establish a meaningful connection and incorporate a holiday theme into your international marketing activities.

Regardless whether you're a seasoned "holiday marketer" or just starting out, this guide will help you to drive your digital marketing efforts across markets and make sure you don't miss out on the potential holiday goldmine.

Take a look into holiday past

Analytics, dashboards and data in general are your best friends and you should treat them as such. Well – kind of ... There's no need to take them out for beers and see how they're doing, but you should always know what's going on.

Although nothing about the holidays has been the same since 2020, laying the foundation on lessons learned is a great place to start.

Delve into analytics from past years to understand what drove the best results. Leverage as many different channels as possible, including SEA campaigns, website performance and social media such as Instagram, TikTok and Pinterest to help gauge what's popular and plan your content and campaigns. Don't leave any stone unturned when it comes to predicting your prospects' and customers' behaviors.

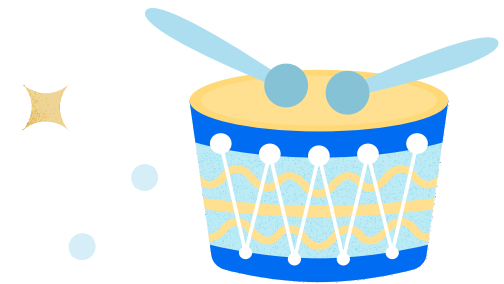
Next, take a look at what your competitors are doing – individually, for each different locale you're targeting. From there, identify the marketing efforts that best fit your business objectives, your brand and your target audiences on each region/market. And always ask yourself (and your team!) whether the measure will actually add value for the addressed audience.

Pro tip

More online shoppers mean greater opportunities for global marketers – for an increased share of the digital wallet. To achieve this, data in all its forms will give you information, evidence and ideas. This is the perfect time of the year for a quick audit of marketing strategies.



Create a festive-themed design



Design and visual cues make all the difference in holiday brand strategy. Less is often more, so keep it simple, fun and easy for your audience to digest. But don't forget to make adjustments where needed – to make your brand assets culturally appropriate and relevant for each region.

A good place to start is by ensuring your local websites, social profiles, emails and other digital channels are aligned and have a consistent, festive look and feel. One that resonates with what the respective holiday means to the communities you're addressing.

Considering the growing number of online shoppers, theming a website for the holiday season is even more important if you have an ecommerce site. An engaging theme evokes the holiday spirit and ultimately helps turn casual browsers into buying customers.

Applying UX best practices such as combining the use of white space with a card-based design helps users to quickly make sense of the information presented. Regarding colors,

striking contrasts naturally guide visitors' eyes to what's important on each page, but be mindful of the associations of colors around the world. Red is known to grab attention and create a sense of urgency, so if it fits the respective season, it can be effectively used for call-to-actions, timed special offers or last-minute deal announcements.

Don't forget to take advantage of your navigation menus to promote specific products you want to highlight, always tailored to the addressed audience at each locale.

Pro tip

If you don't prefer to stick to a quick seasonal makeover and yet don't want to splurge your budget, there are great low cost image libraries available online. Find a set that matches your brand's identity as well as the local connotations of the respective holiday – and have fun applying these tips to your website!

Embed your content with jolly spirit



Alongside timeliness, the effectiveness of your holiday content planning will be decided by how well you manage your resources and understand your different local consumers.

Adding a festive touch to your content can give your brand a friendly personality, but it can be tricky to capture the magic of the season without making people suspicious of its commercial nature.

Stay true to your brand voice. The secret to customizing your content and making it memorable is finding a point of synergy between your business and the emotive aspects of the targeted holiday across different regions. Strike the right balance of informative and entertaining elements, even with novelty formats such as gamification, and your festive content should produce merry results.

As we've also learned in recent years, inclusivity can make or break your global branding strategy. So if your holiday content planning doesn't include all gender identifying people of all backgrounds, you're bound to fall short.

Doesn't the targeted holiday associate well with presents and charity? Orchestrating joint campaigns with local charities can help spread your message of goodwill with engaging content.

Pro tip

Focus on what's essential for each market: In the US, for instance, the bigger leaps global marketers saw last year included Thanksgiving (49.5%) and Black Friday (39.4%). Investing in content topics around these occasions and scheduling them accordingly will surely pay off.



Get your social into holiday mode

87%

of video marketers get a positive ROI from video

Source: Wyzowl

Major holidays deserve special attention in your localized social media strategy – be it Christmas, Easter, Diwali, the Chinese New Year etc. Start by updating your corporate profiles with your season’s chosen theme. If you want to go beyond the basics, tailor your strategy to the different social media platforms and the local traditions associated with the holiday.

Use culturally adapted images for Instagram and Pinterest, take advantage of native videos in Facebook, and share every bit of your company’s local holiday initiatives on Twitter. With videos still being one of the most trending content marketing assets (and not going away soon), it’s only natural that YouTube and viral TikTok is included in the mix.

Let’s not forget about LinkedIn! If you have a global employee network, don’t miss the opportunity to share what your organization is

doing for the holidays across the world. Whether it’s get-togethers or charitable work: People love to see the faces behind the company.

Keep in mind your social holiday marketing doesn’t have to be overly complex to succeed. Even simple initiatives such as creating your own holiday hashtags, sharing holiday pictures from your teams around the world or hosting a giveaway will increase engagement and generate results.

Pro tip

92% of consumers watch videos with the sound off and 50% rely on captions*, so make sure to optimize your holiday videos for silent viewing and localize the captions.

Source: Verizon

Invest early in your seasonal SEO

63%

of major purchases start with online research, even if the purchase itself happens in a store.

Source: ThinkWithGoogle

Although SEO is the most inexpensive marketing tool around, it requires preliminary lead time; pages often only rank after 45 days. Having local SEO game plans even months in advance ensures that you won't be stressing when the respective holidays come around.

From creating and translating [new landing pages](#) to renewing old ones, there's a lot you can do to climb those SERPs.

You may start by building holiday season themed pages for each region (like gift guides), with all meta data, product descriptions and localized images on point. And don't forget your internal linking structure!

You can also focus on improving [product pages](#) and further optimize them, for example by [adding structured data to your product pages](#), showing ratings and pricings. This gives your products rich results on SERPs and an edge over less SEO-savvy competitors.

Pro tip

Don't forget to optimize for speed and mobile, to boost overall user experience and Core Web Vitals scores. And last but not least - create a measurement plan if you don't have any set up yet, so you can analyze your success.

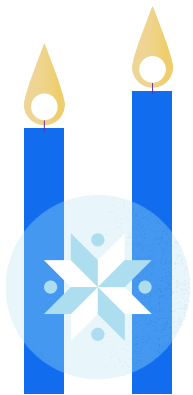
Optimize your ad spending



A good alternative to relying on your organic traffic, especially if you're out of time to wait for your pages to rank, is focusing on Search Engine Advertising (SEA). SEA gives you the opportunity to easily target people who are already actively looking to buy your products or services. The difference during the holiday season is that rivalry becomes fiercer, all the competition is just one click away; so it can be difficult to know exactly where to put your money.

Start by reviewing your historical campaign data. It will help you get a more comprehensive understanding of your optimal budget and make sure your campaigns' bids and budgets won't result in you missing out on high-value traffic. It's all about avoiding to lose out on holiday exposure!

Another good way to optimize your holiday ad budget is to break top performer ads into their own campaigns. This ensures that when traffic is heavy, your top performers won't be restricted by budget – and you'll maximize their reach for the best return possible.



As you're creating holiday-specific ads, don't forget to research holiday keywords for each market/ language. Say you're running ads for keywords like "pet toys": Whenever appropriate, add keywords like "christmas pet toys" or the respective equivalent. Many businesses actually forget to target these keywords in their holiday PPC strategy, while they could have less competition and a higher return for their brand.

If you're new to digital advertising (and even if you're not), don't forget you need to test everything by running multiple versions of ads and tweaking to continually improve them. Analyze your results and conversions against keywords, time of day, device and other criteria to perfect your targeting.

Pro tip

Watching the performance of all your ad campaigns in real time and having the right tools enables you to optimize budget on-the-fly and **maximize your PPC ROI** for each market.

Cut through the holiday inbox clutter

11
billion USD

projected global
email marketing
revenue by 2023

Source: Statista

Email marketing is probably the most used (and sometimes overused) communication channel during the holiday season. With inboxes increasingly crowded, you need to find ways to cut through the noise.

Customers still expect to get deals and promotions from their favorite brands directly in their inbox. But you can try different topics to engage your audience and promote your brand. For example, thank your customers for their support all through the year, invite them to a holiday event or encourage them to contribute to a fundraising campaign by matching their donation or donating a percentage of sales to the same cause.

If you want to enhance your emails, try introducing video content or interactive

elements. You'll not only increase your chances of making your email noticed, but also improve conversion rates.

To bring the feel of the holiday season into your emails, keep the design in line with your overall holiday brand imagery. If you do add festive decorations to your brand logo or website, ensure everything loads effectively on all devices, particularly mobile.

Pro tip

Launching a mobile-responsive email design can increase unique mobile clicks by 15%, so test your emails across multiple devices.

Source: MailChimp

Don't forget SMS = Seasonal Marketing Service



SMS or text messages might seem like an outdated communication tool, but according to research, the likelihood of an SMS being opened is more than four times higher than the likelihood for a marketing email.

It also depends on the nature of the holiday and local cultures: In the US, 2.5% of orders placed on Black Friday converted from SMS. Only a sliver of Black Friday sales can be attributed to SMS marketing campaigns - but a sliver of \$10.8 billion, as in this example, is still a lot!

The fact that only 49% of marketers are said to use SMS also means more than half of your competition might not be active on this channel, giving you the chance to stand out.

Carefully considered and well-timed SMS marketing can have a big impact on your results. Not only are 98% of marketing text

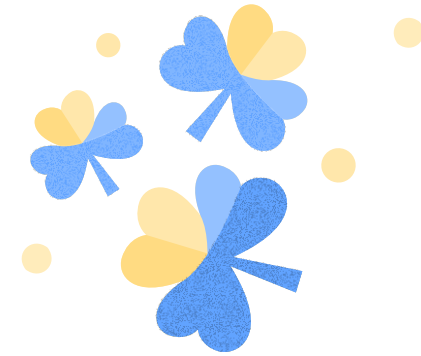
messages opened by consumers, but most of them are read mere minutes after they are being received. This means customers can buy from you within seconds – if you adopt a localized, subtle and inviting approach.

Personalization and all the other trending best practices already mentioned for other platforms are also applicable to SMS, so plan and target accordingly.

Pro tip

There have been 274%+ YoY increases in SMS marketing sends between Thanksgiving and Black Friday in the US, for example. You might think that sounds like too many texts. But if you have the right localized SMS marketing strategy and offer a good enough reason to open, click, shop, and buy, you'll see it paying off.

Smarten up your mobile apps



- Millions of people unwrap new mobile devices every holiday season, and the first thing they do is to furnish them with their favorite apps. If you're an app marketer, it's critical to ensure your apps show up when consumers come looking.

If you haven't yet, this is a good time to set up extra testing on functionality, compatibility and simplicity of the checkout. Stress-testing your app should ensure it can handle traffic and process transactions at 10 times its normal volume, with no noticeable impact of performance to end users.

If your app has an offer suitable for the holiday in question, such as a new update or even a new language, it's especially well positioned to take advantage of the buzz that comes with it. But be careful with the potentially high Cost Per Install.

When it comes to Christmas, bear in mind that the Apple App Store usually freezes during the last week of December, which means new apps and updates will not be accepted during this period. The App Store rankings

stays static for several days, providing the lucky ones who are at the top of downloads at that point in time some great exposure over one of the busiest weeks of the year.

To promote your update, plan a targeted advertising campaign with different keywords for your text or search ads. If appropriate among the respective local audience, you can even use holiday-themed push messages – and in any case, offer exclusive in-app deals for more downloads. If you have the resources, don't miss out on the opportunity to get your app store pages a holiday makeover, localized in line with each region's holiday traditions.

Pro tip

Remember that your audiences may well be staying at home more during their holidays, so design your app holiday promotion strategy accordingly.

Remove language barriers and encourage inclusivity

If you're planning global holiday campaigns, chances are your teams are distributed across locales. Many of them may be working in two or more languages at once every day ... Why not take advantage of the holiday season to treat them to new multilingual features in your internal channels?

Adding **interpretation** to global meetings, be them fully remote or hybrid, enabling multilingual subtitles and transcriptions on your **video conferencing tools, localizing onboarding and elearning courses**: These are ways to take away the brain's stress of constantly working in two languages at once – and to show your individual appreciation for each locale's team.

The best part? Once you have the tools in place, these perks will contribute to a positive employee experience all year round!



Ensure happy holiday seasons for happy teams

Even [Forbes](#) and [Harvard Business Review](#) are saying so: [Employee experience](#) is the new customer experience. In other words: Your employees are your most important internal customers. So don't forget to spread some holiday spirit among them, as well!



88%

of the US adult population feel the holiday season is the most stressful time of the year.

Come together with an agenda of appreciation and “family” spirit

If you're managing international, multicultural and multilingual teams, scattered across the globe, make good use of your digital tools such as [Teams](#), to meet with an agenda made of anything fun and evidence of appreciation, but with zero work issues allowed.

Show appreciation

Holiday seasons often affect people in rather unwanted ways, representing more stress than happiness. At times you'd like your employees to be able to show some extra care for your (external) clients ... So be the source of that extra positive energy – with activities promoting not only team building, but also self-care.

85%

of respondents to an [IDC report](#) agree that improved employee experience and higher employee engagement ensure higher customer satisfaction and subsequently higher profits.

Localize your messages

Localize your intranet to always get the right holiday message across: Out-of-the-box solutions such as [Valo intranet](#) allow you to target your holiday content by profile groups, based for instance on regions.

Ensure inclusive holiday experiences

Tailor your internal communications and platforms to your organization's different audiences, just as you do for customer communications. Take interest in everyone's traditions and make them feel welcome, whether they may celebrate Hanukkah, Ramadan, Diwali, the Lunar New Year ... Be extra mindful and empathetic, for any religious and cultural background – after all, isn't that what's at the core of any holiday? Bottom line is: you want everyone to feel comfortable, included and cherished.

Address diverse holidays as respectfully as diverse customers

For in-depth tips on some of the most important holidays you may want to address apart from Christmas, download also [part II of this ebook!](#)



Incorporating the tips we've covered in this ebook will get you and your global marketing team on your way to a successful holiday season.



And the best tip of all? We at Acolad can help you with all the above (and more) as [your strategic partner for global content](#). Our teams – experts in globalization with a creative mindset – can create, manage, culturally adapt and deliver as much or as little holiday content as you desire.

So, if you're looking to:

- Expand your holiday marketing efforts into other markets
- Shake things up on your global ecommerce site for the holidays
- Widen the user base of your mobile apps with new languages
- Increase employee engagement during the holidays
- Or even hand over all your internationalization efforts to one team

... Let's chat!

We're ready to help you provide the best online experience to your prospects and customers this holiday season and beyond!

Let's talk!

Discover how you can grow traffic and convert leads across your digital channels.

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