

2024

Holiday Marketing Checklist

for Small Business Owners

 AWeber

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Introduction

As the holiday season approaches, it's important that you start planning early in order to execute a comprehensive marketing strategy. The holidays present a prime opportunity to connect with customers, boost sales, and increase brand awareness. To help you make the most of this busy time, we've put together a Holiday Marketing Checklist. This guide will ensure that you're fully prepared to engage your audience, optimize your online presence, and maximize your holiday sales.

Key Dates

Nov 29	→	Black Friday
Nov 30	→	Small Business Saturday (US)
Dec 02	→	Cyber Monday
Dec 03	→	Giving Tuesday
Dec 07	→	Small Business Saturday (UK)
Dec 25	→	Christmas Day
Dec 26	→	Boxing Day (UK, CA, NZ, AU)
Dec 25–Jan 02	→	Hanukkah
Dec 26–Jan 01	→	Kwanzaa
Dec 31	→	New Year's Eve
Jan 01	→	New Year's Day

Stats to Know

58%

of shoppers discovered BFCM deals through retailer emails in 2023.

Source: [Drive Research](#)

44%

of shoppers planned to shop during pre-holiday sales periods in 2023.

Source: [Wpromote](#)

Clear goal setting can increase marketing ROI by up to 30%.

Source: [Fit Small Business](#)

Spending is predicted to remain strong in 2024

This period remains a critical time for businesses. While shoppers start shopping for the holidays at different times, most plan to show up on Black Friday and Cyber Monday, so much of their spending will be concentrated during this period.

Be ready to meet shoppers at Cyber Week and capitalize on this peak shopping period by optimizing your marketing efforts, promotions, and inventory management. Be proactive to ensure your plans are in place well ahead of the holiday shopping season to drive sales performance!



1. Plan and Strategize

September – October

September 1-15: Analyze Past Performance

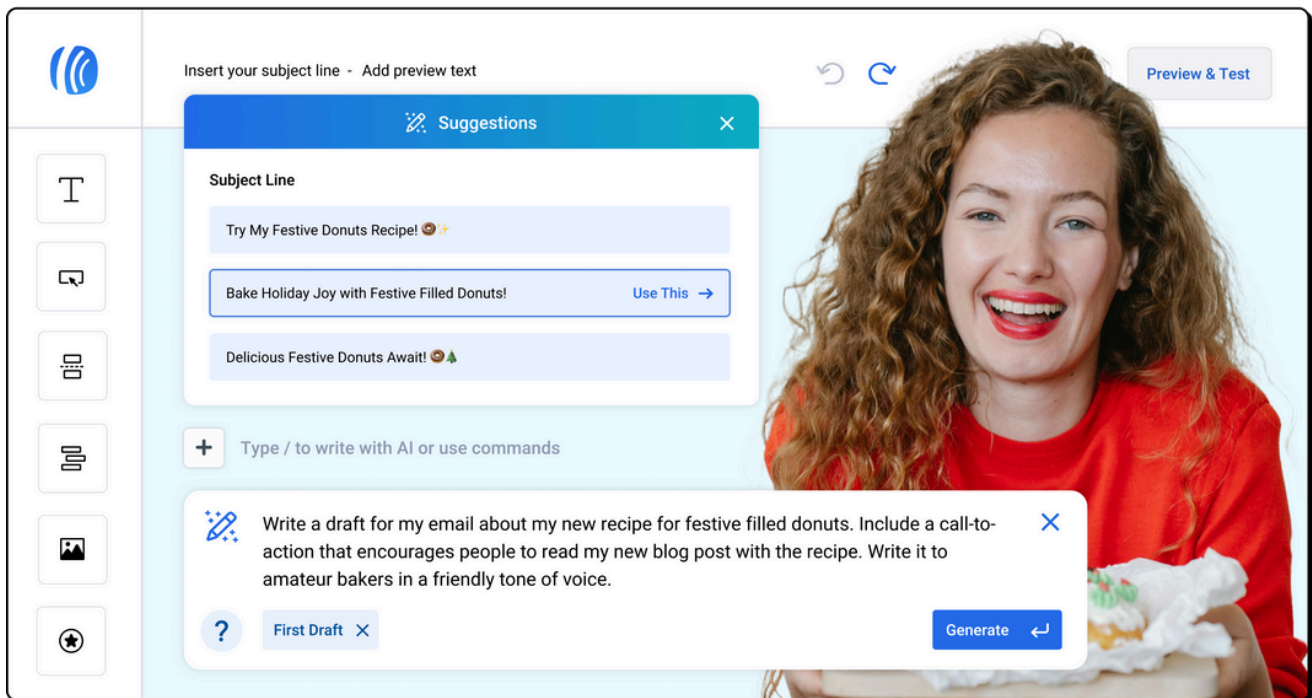
- Review Metrics:** Look at key performance indicators (KPIs) from last year such as open rates, click-through rates, conversion rates, and revenue generated. Identify which campaigns performed best and why.
- Identify What Worked:** Pinpoint the elements that led to success—was it a particular email subject line, the timing of your promotions, or the type of discounts offered?
- Spot Areas for Improvement:** Analyze underperforming campaigns to understand what went wrong. Was the messaging off, or were the offers not compelling enough?
- Customer Feedback:** Review customer feedback from last year's holiday season. Did customers mention any issues or preferences?
- Competitor Analysis:** Look at what your competitors did during the last holiday season. Identify any trends or tactics they used successfully that you can adapt for your own campaigns.

September 16-30: Set Goals and Budget

- Define Clear Objectives:** Establish specific goals for the 2024 holiday season, such as revenue targets, customer acquisition goals, or email engagement benchmarks. Ensure these objectives align with your overall business strategy.
- Allocate Your Budget:** Break down your holiday marketing budget across various channels—email marketing, social media ads, Google ads, etc. Prioritize spending based on the effectiveness of each channel in previous campaigns.
- Forecast Inventory Needs:** Based on your goals, determine the amount of inventory you'll need. Ensure you have the budget to support both production and any additional shipping or storage costs.

October 1-15: Develop Marketing Plan

- Outline Key Campaigns:** Plan out the major promotions you'll run during the holiday season, including Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and any special holiday deals. Determine the timing and focus for each campaign. Check out our holiday email templates and our campaign marketplace for pre-built automation templates that will get you up and running quickly.
- Content Creation:** Draft email copy, blog posts, and social media content tailored for the holiday season. Struggling with writer's block? Whether you need help generating a first rough draft, polishing your call to action, or generating fresh ideas for your next campaign, our Writing Assistant can help take things off your plate.
- Email Marketing Strategy:** Build a calendar of email campaigns, from teaser emails to final calls-to-action. Integrate automated sequences that will nurture leads and drive sales throughout the season. If you don't have one handy, no problem. We've got you covered with our free downloadable email marketing calendar template!



2. Build and Optimize

October – November

October 16-31: Create Content and Promotions

- Finalize Email Campaigns:** Design and finalize your holiday-themed emails. Draft compelling subject lines, preview texts, and CTAs that resonate with your audience and drive action. Be sure to use our Subject Line Assistant to get subject lines and preview text suggestions that follow best practices!
- Social Media Posts:** Create a series of holiday-themed social media posts. Schedule these posts to ensure consistent engagement across platforms during the busy season.
- Website Banners:** Design and implement festive banners and graphics for your website that highlight your holiday promotions and special offers.
- Promotional Offers:** Define the details of your holiday promotions, including discount codes, bundle deals, and limited-time offers. Ensure they align with your marketing goals and budget.

November 1-10: Optimize Online Presence

- Mobile Optimization:** Ensure your website is fully optimized for mobile users, with responsive design, easy navigation, and fast load times. A smooth mobile experience is crucial as more shoppers browse and buy on their phones during the holiday season. Need a website? Create a beautiful, mobile-friendly landing page for your business with AWeber!
- User Experience (UX) Review:** Conduct a UX audit of your website to identify and fix any issues that could hinder a seamless shopping experience. Focus on simplifying the checkout process and ensuring that product pages are clear and informative.
- SEO Update:** Refresh your website's SEO to capitalize on holiday search traffic. Update meta descriptions, keywords, and alt tags with holiday-specific terms to improve your search engine ranking.

November 11-20: Segment and Personalize

- Audience Segmentation:** Divide your email list into targeted segments. A segment is a collection of subscribers that you can create based off of certain specific search criteria. Segments are a great way to keep track of and reach out to particular groups of subscribers within a list.
- Personalized Messaging:** Craft personalized email campaigns tailored to each segment. Use customer data to personalize subject lines, product recommendations, and offers to increase engagement and conversion rates.
- Dynamic Content Blocks:** Utilize dynamic content in your emails to automatically display different images, offers, or text based on the recipient's segment. This adds a layer of personalization that can significantly boost response rates.
- Behavioral Triggers:** Set up automated email sequences triggered by specific customer actions, such as abandoned cart reminders, product recommendations based on browsing history, or thank-you emails for past purchases.
- Test and Refine:** Conduct A/B testing on your personalized campaigns to determine what resonates best with each segment. Use the insights gained to refine your messaging and optimize for better results.

One of our holiday email templates!



3. Execute and Monitor

November – December

November 21-30: Launch Pre-Holiday Promotions

- Start Early Campaigns:** Launch pre-holiday promotions targeting early shoppers. Offer exclusive deals or early access to sales for loyal customers.
- Email Countdown:** Send countdown emails leading up to major shopping days, creating anticipation and urgency.
- Social Media Teasers:** Use social media to tease upcoming holiday promotions and special offers, encouraging followers to stay tuned.
- Bundle Offers:** Create special holiday bundles or gift sets to appeal to early gift-buyers, and highlight these in your promotional materials.

December 1-15: Focus on Peak Shopping Days


- Highlight Key Shopping Events:** Focus your marketing efforts on major shopping days like Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, and Cyber Monday. Offer exclusive discounts or limited-time offers.
- Leverage Email Marketing:** Send targeted emails for each event, featuring the best deals and emphasizing the limited-time nature of the offers.
- Social Media Blitz:** Increase your social media activity during these peak days, using ads and posts to drive traffic to your website and highlight flash sales.
- Collaborate with Influencers:** Partner with influencers, micro-influencers, or local personalities to amplify your promotions and reach a broader audience during these crucial days.

December 16-24: Last-Minute Shoppers

- Promote Express Shipping:** Emphasize express shipping options to reassure last-minute shoppers that their gifts will arrive on time.
- Offer Gift Cards:** Highlight gift cards as the perfect solution for last-minute buyers, especially those who are unsure of what to purchase.
- Last-Minute Deals:** Introduce last-minute discounts or “buy one, get one” offers to entice procrastinators to make their purchases.
- Remind via Email:** Send reminder emails to your customers about the final days to order with guaranteed delivery before the holidays.

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4. Post-Holiday Follow-Up

January

January 1-15: Review and Report

- Analyze Campaign Data:** Review the performance of your holiday campaigns, analyzing metrics such as open rates, click-through rates, and conversions to identify what worked best.
- Gather Customer Feedback:** Collect feedback from your customers through surveys or follow-up emails to understand their experience and gather insights for future campaigns.
- Sales and Inventory Review:** Evaluate your sales figures and inventory levels to assess the success of your holiday promotions and adjust future stock accordingly.
- Document Lessons Learned:** Compile a report summarizing the successes and areas for improvement, setting the stage for a better-prepared holiday season next year.

January 16-31: Customer Retention

- Send Thank-You Emails:** Show appreciation to your holiday customers with personalized thank-you emails, reinforcing the connection with your brand.
- Loyalty Programs:** Introduce or promote a loyalty program to encourage repeat business, offering points or discounts for future purchases.
- Post-Holiday Promotions:** Offer exclusive post-holiday deals to keep customers engaged and shopping even after the holiday rush.
- Re-engagement Campaigns:** Target inactive customers with special offers or content to bring them back and convert them into repeat buyers.



Happy
Holidays

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