

DIRECT AGENTS

AUGUST 2021



HOLIDAY 2021 TREND REPORT

Holiday Marketing Planning Checklist

For many brands, the holiday shopping season is the most important time of year. As marketers, we know how important it is to plan and execute Q4 campaigns that will help our companies exceed business goals. To help you prepare, we've put together a checklist of areas to focus on as you finalize your holiday marketing campaigns.

01







Consider This Year's Unique Calendar



Holiday shopping starts earlier every year, and as a result, so does marketing. This year is no exception. While last year's holiday shopping season jumpstarted in October as



a result of a rescheduled Amazon Prime Day, the **global supply chain disruption** is the key factor pushing consumers to begin holiday shopping earlier this season. Many consumers are now aware that **brands are facing inventory challenges** and are shopping earlier to ensure they can get the products they want in time for the holidays. When planning your holiday marketing campaigns, consider that shoppers will be active in October or even earlier.



\$223 Billion

US Retailers will face an additional \$223 billion in costs this holiday season due to global supply chain issues (Salesforce).

Because both Black Friday and Cyber Monday typically fall in November, consider shifting more budget and activations to November rather than placing greater emphasis on December.

Retail sales will increase between 10.5% and 13.5% this year (NRF).

In 2020, many retailers started early bird Black Friday sales up to four weeks before Thanksgiving (Printful).

10.5%

A bar chart with two teal-colored bars. The shorter bar on the left is labeled '10.5%' and the taller bar on the right is labeled '13.5%'. The bars are positioned at the bottom of the page, with the text '10.5%' and '13.5%' appearing above them in a large, light teal font.

13.5%

02



A serene beach scene at sunset. The sky is a mix of soft pinks, oranges, and blues, with a few wispy clouds. The ocean is a deep teal color, with gentle waves washing onto a sandy beach. The sand is light-colored and shows some ripples. A large, semi-transparent teal rectangle is overlaid on the center of the image, containing white text.

**Be Transparent
Regarding
Shipping,
Inventory, and
Options**

Another key consideration for consumers is shipping time. This year, many brands will face inventory challenges and shipping delays. As concerns around shipping delays and low inventory levels rise among consumers, it's paramount to ensure that any impact on product availability and your ability to deliver in time for the holidays is **upfront, honest, and clear** to the customer. Make sure all customers know the final day to purchase with guaranteed delivery by **December 25**.



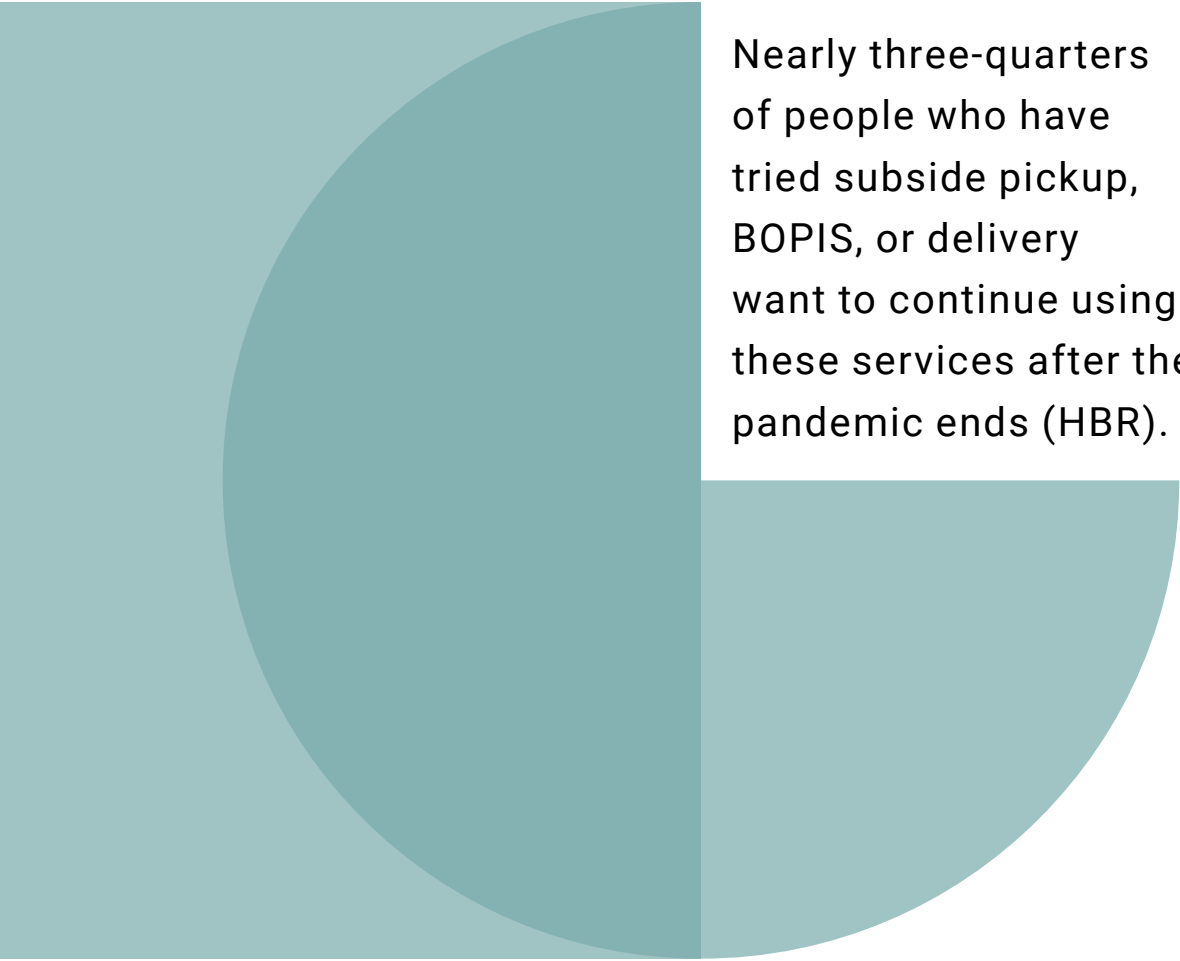
56.3

Freight cargo delivery time averaged 69 days in August 2021, compared with 56.3 days in March 2020.

One way to increase the likelihood of converting a customer in Q4 will be to promote all of the different ways that they can engage with your brand, including in-store shopping, curbside pickup, Buy Online Pickup In-Store (BOPIS), social shopping, and online marketplaces such as Amazon or Walmart.

By the end of summer 2020, the share of retailers offering curbside pickup jumped 44% (HBR).

44%



Nearly three-quarters of people who have tried curbside pickup, BOPIS, or delivery want to continue using these services after the pandemic ends (HBR).



\$140.96

By 2024, US click-and-collect sales will reach \$140.96 billion (BusinessInsider).

Establishing a variety of ways to shop, and also securing trust in your site and shipping, will be critical pieces not just for this holiday season, but for your **Q4 and beyond**.

03



A serene beach scene at sunset. The sky is a mix of soft pinks, oranges, and blues, with scattered clouds. The ocean is a deep teal color, with gentle waves washing onto a sandy beach. A large, semi-transparent teal rectangle is centered over the image, containing the text "Plan Your Promotions" in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

Plan Your Promotions

Brands must have a strong understanding of which products or services are most likely to be purchased as gifts to **plan successful holiday campaigns**. Look at previous years' sales data to **inform decisions** around which products to center holiday campaigns around.

Recent surveys have shown that 70% of US consumers actively seek promotions and deals when holiday shopping, and often make purchase decisions based on promotions. Given the economic challenges many shoppers are facing, deals will be particularly important this year.





70% of US consumers actively sought promotions and coupons when holiday shopping in 2020

When discounted pricing is not possible, look to other ways of luring shoppers during the competitive holiday season, including free shipping, free product samples, bundles, bulk discounts, or loyalty perks.

70%

Incorporating promotional strategies will be critical to unlocking more sales, but it has to be done at the right time and in the right way to preserve margins. Brands need to think about **targeting different levels of customers at different stages** with varying degrees of promotions. Consider tactics like **time-bound discounts** with low inventory notices or flash sales, **bundled promotions** to help sell some of the not-so-best sellers, or **staggered discounts**.



Key Takeaways

1. Your customers will likely begin holiday shopping in October. Plan your holiday campaigns accordingly!
2. Black Friday and Cyber Monday both fall in November, so consider increasing marketing budgets for November.
3. Communicate shipping deadlines and product availability clearly with your customers. Over-promising and under-delivering is frustrating to shoppers.
4. Consumers expect promotions and will choose brands that offer them. If you can't offer discounts, be creative with what you can offer, including free shipping, product samples, or loyalty perks.



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