

A Guide to Social Media Marketing for the HOLIDAYS



CONTENTS

Introduction

3

**Dates to
Remember**

5

**Holiday
Campaign
Incentives**

8

**Holiday
Campaign
Themes**

11

Summary

17

Kids are back in school. Football has begun. The hockey puck has dropped (our editor made us put this in). Fall is in the air. That means only one thing -- you'll soon see holiday displays in every store. (Heck, you probably have already.)

As annoying as holiday-creep can be (we literally saw a Halloween display in July WHILE AT THE BEACH), it does underscore one very important message: The holiday season is a big deal for retailers. Even many eCommerce stores see a huge increase in sales during the Holidays.

Small businesses can capitalize on consumers' increased spending by using social media to turn the holiday rush into holiday sales.

In this Ebook, we'll show you exactly how to set your business up for success during the all-important holiday season. You'll also learn how to bring in sales by executing a kick-butt holiday campaign or promotion.



A word about 'The Holidays'

While Christmas is definitely a retailer's flagship holiday during this time of year, it's absolutely not the ONLY holiday. Thanksgiving, Black Friday, Hanukah, Boxing Day, New Years, Kwanzaa and so many others all occur during this critical 3-month period. Don't let yourself get stuck on The Big Red and Green Machine with your holiday promotions.

Remember

AmpCase



Our trusty hypothetical company is back! AmpCase makes smartphone cases of all styles, but their premier product is a case with antenna components built in to increase signal in poor reception areas. Keep an eye out for AmpCase studies throughout this book for examples of how they created holiday-themed marketing campaigns.

DATES TO REMEMBER

In recent years, holiday shopping has taken on a life of its own and become something of a competitive sport among both retailers and shoppers. We all know that friend of ours that pulls an all-nighter (complete with a laminated flow chart, portable heater, and what he/she swears is a massive thermos of hot cocoa) to get all of his/her holiday shopping done before the sun rises on Black Friday.

We've added new words to our lexicon thanks to the phenomenon from "door buster" to "early bird" to "Black Fridayitis" (ok, we just made that last one up, but is there a better term for the change that afflicts seemingly normal folks on the day right after Thanksgiving?).



The point is, holiday shopping is big. HUGE. And shoppers are . . . um . . . aggressive. They know their stuff and you should too. To start, the major holidays in 2013 are:

HANUKAH:

November 27th
through December 5th
(comes a bit early this
year and actually overlaps
with Thanksgiving – be
prepared)

BOXING DAY:

December 26th

CHRISTMAS:

December 25th

KWANZAA:

December 26th
through
January 1st

**SAINT
NICHOLAS DAY:**

December 6th
(this holiday is a touch
regional, but where
it's celebrated, it's an
excellent marketing
opportunity)

THANKSGIVING:

November 28th

NEW YEAR'S EVE:

December 31st

But the major holidays aren't the only ones to be aware of. There are a whole host of other holidays/noteworthy events to be prepared for this season:

BLACK FRIDAY:

November 29th.

This one is technically not a holiday. However, it is arguably the biggest shopping day of the season.

A big day can set the stage for success throughout the season.

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY:

November 30th.

Like Black Friday, this isn't a holiday either. Something of a newcomer to the holiday lineup, the Saturday after Black Friday is when consumers are encouraged to support local small businesses -- "mom and pop shops," if you will.

CYBER MONDAY:

December 2nd.

Do you get the feeling that every day between Thanksgiving and Christmas will eventually be some sort of event?

The Monday after Thanksgiving is the day where e-commerce is king. Massive online sales and incentives ensure that not a lot of people are being productive at work that day (except for us at **Rignite** – we're always tirelessly working with enthusiasm, right boss?).

FREE SHIPPING DAY:

December 16th.

Yes, it's a thing (along with National Bathtub Party Day* - December 5th). Held the third Monday of December, many online retailers offer free shipping and guaranteed delivery by Christmas Eve. You should, too.

**In all seriousness, these "silly" little observances make great social media fodder. Find one that ties into your product or service (in this case, bathtub refitters, plumbers, or bath & body shops could offer a sale coinciding with National Bathtub Party Day). Be creative!*

HOLIDAY CAMPAIGN INCENTIVES

Now that your calendars are marked, circled and highlighted, it's time to fuel your holiday promotions! How do you influence a customer to purchase a TV from you over your competitor, who has the same TV at the same price? You incentivize them. Discounts are the obvious incentive, but giving away physical gifts can help you stand out. It's more exciting (and marketable) to get a free collection of Blu-Ray movies ("The 5 movies you MUST see in HD") with the purchase of a plasma television than it is to get a simple 10% discount. Be sure that your incentives are as marketable as your products (and that they fit within your budget).

When you decide on an incentive, unleash the power of your marketing to promote it. It goes without saying (so we'll say it anyway) that you should use your website, your email newsletter and your social media to let people know ahead of time about your holiday promotions.

Rignite Insight: You can even build awareness of your promotions by getting your audience involved. Consider offering a discount that grows with the amount of shares you get. "On Black Friday, all purchases will be 10% off, plus an additional 1% for every 100 shares this post gets!"

As well as general, all-day discounts, consider these other options for your promotions:

EARLY BIRD/ NIGHT OWL DISCOUNTS

In addition to offering a discount, you can encourage sales throughout the day with exclusive offers during non-peak hours.



FLASH SALES

By rotating sales on different items (every hour or two) throughout the day, you can create a sense of urgency and a reason for people to keep checking back on your site. As a (pretty significant) bonus, this is an excellent reason to encourage your audience to follow your company on Twitter and Facebook, so they can get updates on the latest sale item. Also, you should tease some of the big ticket items in the days leading up to your flash sale and make customers check your website all day to find out when they're actually on sale.

FREE GIFTS

There's something about generosity that is contagious. You can feed into that by offering free gifts for the first 10 customers – they're buying gifts for others, why not give them something for themselves?



FREE SHIPPING

There's even a day for it now!

But don't let that stop you from offering this great perk on other days too. People like to know that all they'll have to pay is the purchase price and not worry about any extra shipping costs. One thing to remember, though, is that you may want to add a condition that requires a purchase of at least \$50 (or some suitable amount). You don't want your incentive to end up negating all your profits.

GIVE DISCOUNTS FOR SHARING

By offering a small discount for every person that "shares" your company's holiday post, you can get the dual benefit of offering a discount and creating social sharing.



HOLIDAY CAMPAIGN THEMES

One of our favorite ancient marketing rules is that “an incentive does not a campaign make,” and in the holiday season, this rule rings especially true. A campaign takes a bit more planning and work (don’t all the good things?). In return, though, you get a great boost to sales PLUS you can build your community and create repeat customers to boot. Just remember, since these will need to be planned for ahead of time, you want to start getting ready sooner than later.



Here are a few examples and ideas you can use for your holiday themed marketing campaigns:

BOUNCE-BACK CAMPAIGNS:

Offer customers who spend a certain amount during their initial holiday order a discount on their next order – but here's the key– that next order must be within a certain timeframe (i.e. the first month or the first quarter of 2014). By offering only a small window to redeem their incentives, customers feel a sense of urgency, thus making them more inclined to come back and make a purchase instead of filing it away for later and then forgetting about it.

This type of deal serves two purposes: It encourages customers to spend more now to reach the threshold but also virtually guarantees a future sale during a notoriously slow period. Win-win!



AmpCase

Study

AmpCase is ready for the holidays and they've got a holiday campaign in mind. They run a bounce-back campaign called "Treat Yourself" that goes like this:

Treat Yourself!

We know that you're probably buying a case for someone you love... and probably hoping that someone is getting you one too. Well, you don't need to hope! Buy a case during December for \$50 or more and we'll give you \$25 off another purchase in January! Treat yourself to the case you really wanted, but didn't get!

ON-TIME ARRIVAL CAMPAIGNS:

During the holidays, weary shoppers are always seeking ways to avoid going into crowded malls. Offering a break in shipping costs (i.e free 2-day delivery with any online order over \$50 today) is a great incentive to promote online ordering. But, potential buyers may still have concern about receiving the gift before the holiday. Eliminate their concern by making each delivery guaranteed to be on time. Let your customers know that, for example, all orders placed by December 19 will arrive by December 24th or the purchase is free.



FUN CAMPAIGNS:



Don't forget, the holidays are a time for fun and laughs too. While we've been discussing campaigns focused on pricing or shipping incentives, the campaign itself can be an incentive too.

For example, Office Max offers an "Elf Yourself" game every year that allows people **to make a holiday-themed video**. Then, they can share it on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and through email. We have a friend who makes it her Christmas card each year (looking forward to it again this year, Beth!).

Think outside the box and loop in your creative or IT teams -- they are bound to have some fun ideas.

CHARITY CAMPAIGNS:

People typically feel very charitable during the holidays. (Just maybe not when they're waiting in line at the mall food court - We just want an Orange Julius, shopping is thirsty work!)

Consider tying in a brand-relevant charity to sales during the holiday season to make customers “feel good” and evoke a sense of goodwill towards your company. You can offer to match any monetary contribution they make up to a certain dollar amount, or get a little creative with your products. For example, Knit Picker, a hypothetical company that sells hand-made scarves, hats and mittens, offers a charity campaign. For every purchase of

\$50 or more, they'll donate a pair of mittens to a local homeless shelter or a baby hat to the March of Dimes for premature babies.



Macy's does a stellar job of this with their **“Thanks For Sharing”** and **“Believe”** campaigns which have raised more than \$16.5 million for national organizations including Make-A-Wish®, the American Heart Association's Go Red For Women® movement, The Breast Cancer Research Foundation®, Futures Without Violence® and other charitable organizations.

Summary

Get started early. And by that, we mean last week. No, seriously, now's the time to plan out your promotions for the entire holiday season. Go ahead and pick your incentives and match them up with a theme that will resonate with your target audience.

Whether you plan to be all business, or have a little fun, be sure to take advantage of as many holidays and key dates that make sense for your business and audience.

Have You Tried Rignite?

Rignite is a social media software solution that helps small to medium-sized businesses grow by using social media. Rignite makes it easy to run campaigns on social media—including scheduling, executing, monitoring, and reporting results.

Sign Up For A Free Trial Today!