



2018

Holiday Playbook

Your guide to winning customers
and driving sales this holiday season



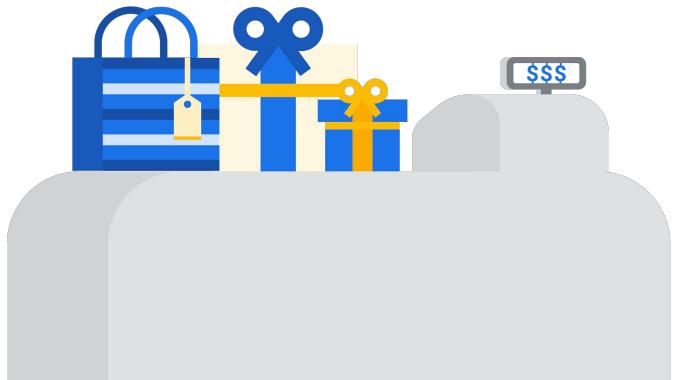
Time to get into the holiday spirit

The holiday season is a critical sales period. During this time, consumers are looking for gifts for friends, family and sometimes, themselves.

In 2017, online sales hit an all time high during the holiday period; we anticipate continued growth in 2018.

Be there on your customer's journey and drive the best season yet for your business both online and in-store.

This playbook will help you unwrap a strategy to make 2018 your best holiday season yet.



Grow your holiday sales in 3 ways

1. Connect

2. Drive Action

3. Accelerate

1. Connect: Find your best and next best customers

Holiday shoppers are loyal to the gift, not the retailer

70% of holiday shoppers said they visit multiple websites before deciding what to buy and who to buy it from.¹



6 in 10
in-store purchases involve
digital research.¹



Solve with Google

Find your loyal customers online and acquire new customers with similar profiles. Leverage your CRM database as part of a robust Audience Strategy and use Google tools to scale.

Connect "in-market" shoppers with your relevant assortment early in their research process with upper-funnel ad units such as Showcase Ads and TrueView.

¹ 2018 Postnord E-commerce in the Nordics

2. Drive Action: Make interacting with your business as seamless as possible

Impatience (& last minute shopping) drives shoppers to Google for assistance

People spend an average of 13 days researching a purchase. But once they decide to buy, almost half expect it within 2 days.¹



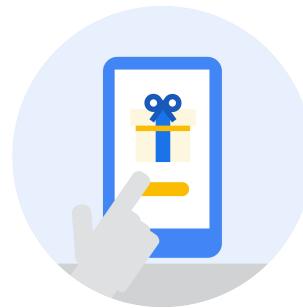
1 in 3

of holiday shoppers carried out research on stock levels before visiting a store.¹

Solve with Google

Create fast, frictionless experiences. Speed up mobile sites with AMP/PWA, payments with Google Pay, and personalized recommendations with Cloud & Firebase.

Ensure shoppers find their gift in-stock with feed-based product ads, whether they want it online or in-store.



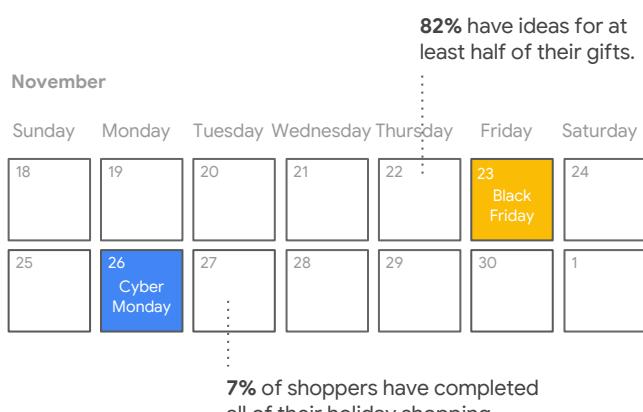
1 in 3

Shoppers who said they made a purchase online did so on their mobile device.²

3. Accelerate: Drive your business with insights and automation

Shoppers research their gifts early

In 2017, 72% of shoppers said they decided what they wanted early in the season and waited to buy.³



Solve with Google

- Measure impact across channels both online and offline
- Data-driven Attribution (DDA) provides an understanding of how early season clicks influence late-season purchases.
- Pair with automated, Smart Bidding & proximity bidding to turn a lengthening shopping journey into a more profitable one.

¹ 2018 Postnord E-commerce in the Nordics

² 2018 Postnord E-commerce in the Nordics

³ 2017 Google/Ipsos Shopping Study

‘Tis the Season to Prepare Early

1. Set your campaigns up for success well ahead of holiday spikes

Now is the time to make sure you're fully prepared to hit the ground running when the holiday shopping season hits. Get your campaigns primed and ready before the holiday season begins so you can spend more time making adjustments during the peak season.

2. Finalize your promotional calendar

Finalize your holiday calendar to ensure your promotions are aligned and scheduled to deliver smoothly. Think about how your holiday calendar looks when you layer on your digital promotions to capitalize on peak retail days during the season.



Don't forget to add your own important dates to this calendar: sale dates, last shipping date, etc.



1/4 consumers will start their holiday shopping before Halloween.¹

3. Don't forget international holidays

Though the name may change from country to country (Click Frenzy in Australia, Buen Fin in Mexico, etc.), the concept of “big pre-holiday sales” is a global phenomenon that spans across the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Asia.



Searches for “gifts” are higher in the week before Christmas than the week of Cyber Monday²

November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Singles Day (CHN)	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 Thanksgiving (US)	23 Black Friday	24 Small Business Saturday
25	26 Cyber Monday	27	28	29	30	1

December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 Hanukkah Begins	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 Green Monday	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22 Super Saturday
23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26 Boxing Day (CA)	27	28	29
30	31 New Year's Eve					

¹ 2017 Google/Ipsos Shopping Study
² 2017 Google/Ipsos Shopping Study

Monthly Checklists

Your Guide to Winning Customers and Driving Sales This Holiday Season



Google



October Checklist

Summer has come and gone and October is here. It's time to kick our holiday plans into high gear and start activating for holiday.

BUDGET

1. Activate holiday budgets

Finalize your promotional calendar

Finalize your holiday calendar to ensure your promotions are aligned and scheduled to deliver smoothly. Think about how your holiday calendar looks when you layer on your digital promotions to capitalize on peak retail days during the season.

Finalize forecasts and budgets

Finalize your holiday forecasts and budgets based on your promotional calendar. Set aside time with your Google team to review your plan, sales objectives and strategy to ensure you are aligned.

VIDEO & DISPLAY

2. Start building brand and holiday assortment awareness

Make your videos shoppable

Connect viewers directly to your products and provide information that brings them closer to making a purchase. Make your video ads interactive with [TrueView for Shopping](#) as users begin their holiday research.

Define your custom audiences

Set up [custom intent](#) and [custom affinity](#) audiences across both Video & Display early to ensure they can run properly during peak season

Conduct a product feed audit

Ensure product feeds up to date; the higher the SKU coverage the better your dynamic remarketing campaigns will perform.

Launch a remarketing audit

Make sure your remarketing tag is present on all pages, with proper custom parameters passing through each page. Build audience lists based on these custom parameters on site by splitting the audience using a “funnel” approach → Site Visitors, Category Viewers, Product Page Viewers, Cart Abandoners, and Past Purchasers.

Set up your Display & Video 360 deals

Negotiate deals with publishers and set up deals early in Display & Video 360



October Checklist

AUDIENCES

3. Re-engage your most valuable customers

Retargeting with dynamic ads

Adopt one campaign, five adgroup structure along with automated bidding to utilize best of Google Dynamic Remarketing. Make use of dynamic responsive ads for 100% coverage

Monitor performance & scale

Add all audience lists to all campaigns. Aim for 100% adgroup / campaign coverage of your audience lists by the start of October, which will give you time to analyze performance data prior to holidays

Customer ad copy by audience

Do you want to speak to your existing customers differently? Perhaps a homeowner will respond to different messaging than a home renter? Prepare and test ad copy using [if/then statements for audiences](#). Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Reactivate dormant users, such as seasonal or recently inactive customers
- Upsell to high-value customers who are part of your loyalty program
- Highlight deals to existing newsletter subscribers

AUTOMATION

4. Optimize your Smart Bidding strategy

Reassess Targets

Based on early results, reassess in late October. Give your bidding strategy a chance to ramp up ahead of holiday demand.



**Audiences + Automation:
Better Together**

Enabling Smart Bidding will allow you to automatically optimize to audience signals.

Google



October Checklist

SEARCH

5. Capture early intent

Check in on account hygiene

Audit engine accounts (structure, ads, keywords, extensions, audiences). Don't do it alone: reach out to your Google team to perform a hygiene audit of your accounts.

Prepare your ad copy plan

Develop your promotional copy plan with seasonal keywords. Consider how you can use [countdown ads](#) to highlight promotional events. Plan [Promotion Extensions](#) and (where available) [Price Extensions](#).

Uncover missing keywords

Hunt for missing keywords by running search terms report for the holiday period last year. Filter for conversions > 0 and cross reference them against your current keyword list.

Manage your keyword portfolio

Create broad match versions of promising keywords. Start with your high-performing exact match keywords and create broad and phrase match types to increase your reach. Your Google team can provide keywords recommendations to help ensure your key categories are covered and easily discoverable.

Activate and expand Dynamic Search Ads

15% of queries on Google.com every day is completely new - never seen before. Additionally, you want to cover your product pages with specific ads leading to those pages. To do this, start with adding DSA ad groups to your regular search campaigns. Then, create a DSA catch-all campaign targeting All Webpages with a low bid, to close any coverage gaps you may have in the account.

Prepare for an influx of mobile shoppers

Engage on-the-go shoppers by adding [mobile-relevant extensions](#) to your ad (location, call, price, app, etc.)

Adjust your ad rotation settings

Ensure ad rotation is set to 'Optimize' to automatically show your best performing & most relevant ads

Enable AdSense for Search (AFS)

Opt in to Search Partners across all your Search campaigns, extending their reach to hundreds of non-Google websites, as well as YouTube and other Google sites. This will help you reach your customers wherever they are searching.

Holiday Performance Tip

Have a Dynamic Search Ads ad group in each regular campaign to cover the queries you may have missed, and to deep-link users to the most relevant page on your site.



October Checklist

SHOPPING

6. Make your products discoverable

Double down on mobile

Include [mSite URL](#) in your feed to capture demand if your site is not responsive.

Make sure products are all approved to show on Google

Keeping your data fresh and accurate is key in having your products show up for holiday shoppers.

Merchant Center is your place to maintain your product data and maximize opportunity to show in results.

Use the [diagnostics reports](#) to remedy product disapprovals and check the [Opportunities tab](#) for improvements to drive even more clicks. Ask your Google rep for a feed audit if you haven't already.

Set up merchant promotions

Set up promotions to match your planned calendar using [Merchant Promotions](#) to highlight offers. Your sale information like price and availability will automatically update when using these feed attributes.

*Note: currently available in US, UK, FR, DE, AU, & IN.

Enable AdSense for Search (AFS)

Opt in to Search Partners across all your Shopping campaigns which will extend the reach of your search ads to hundreds of non-Google websites, as well as YouTube and other Google sites. Reach your customers wherever they are searching for your products and services.





October Checklist

ONLINE TO OFFLINE

7. Scale your drive-to-store tactics

Finalize local feeds

Upload feed to merchant center and schedule inventory checks if you haven't already.

Save time by setting up a real-time dashboard to monitor holiday sales

Set-up a [data studio dashboard](#) of your omni-sales to share throughout the organization over the holiday rush. Use your estimated value per visit or the store sales direct basket values to estimate impact of marketing impact on the stores. Share report with relevant stakeholders in the company.

Develop copy for local campaigns for holiday events

Consider creating a new campaign to drive local KPIs for store traffic and sales over the holiday period, with specific budget and bids to manage key offline events in your holiday calendar. Build store-focused ad copy with special in-store deals to show on an expanded local keyword list (e.g. "near me", "store", "hours")

Enhance local keyword & category expansion

Some keywords and categories are better than others at driving visits in store. These keywords/categories are being undervalued due to their strong offline impact, and present an opportunity to increase local sales. Review your Google Ads Search Terms Report and analyze category performance to determine key drivers.

SEARCH ADS 360

8. Optimize your Search Ads 360 Strategy

Identify expansion opportunities

Using your Google Merchant Centre Feed, [inventory management campaigns](#) will automatically generate Keywords, Ads, Ad Groups and Campaigns at scale, freeing up your time and allowing you to focus on initiatives that really matter to your business over the Holiday Period.

Implement purchase detail reports

Set up your Floodlight transaction activities to provide Search Ads 360 with the data it needs to report on revenue, cost, and profit for individual products in your inventory feed. See [here](#) for how to implement purchase detail reports.

Avoid bidding conflict

Ensure adequate bid strategy coverage and no overlap with Google Ads bid strategies.

Notes



Google

