



# A RETAIL PLANNING GUIDE TO HOLIDAY PROMOTIONS

(and how to make it less hectic with  
easy-to-use tech)



# It's that time of year again

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We all know how important the holiday season can be for retail businesses. The “most wonderful time of year” guarantees more eyes on your storefront and a much-deserved boost in profits.

However, as more businesses work harder during their holidays, you'll need to differentiate yourself to get people through the door and, hopefully, planning their return visits later in the year.

If you're already checking inventory, prepping for customers to find the right gifts, and more, then you're already off to a great start. But that alone won't guarantee success in today's challenging environment. There's working harder, and there's working smarter. That's where tech can help.

Getting people in the door is an art, not a science. From refining your online presence to creating a seamless customer experience, there are always new approaches to the holiday season. With the right tech and strategic marketing, you can do more than get your name recognized.

This guide explains how the right tools and tech can speed up transactions and streamline your marketing for the holiday season.

What's the benefit? It'll give you a template to work with year after year. You know your brand and your business best. So use these ideas to kick-start your own initiatives and maximize every opportunity the holidays deliver.



# Holiday shopping starts earlier than ever

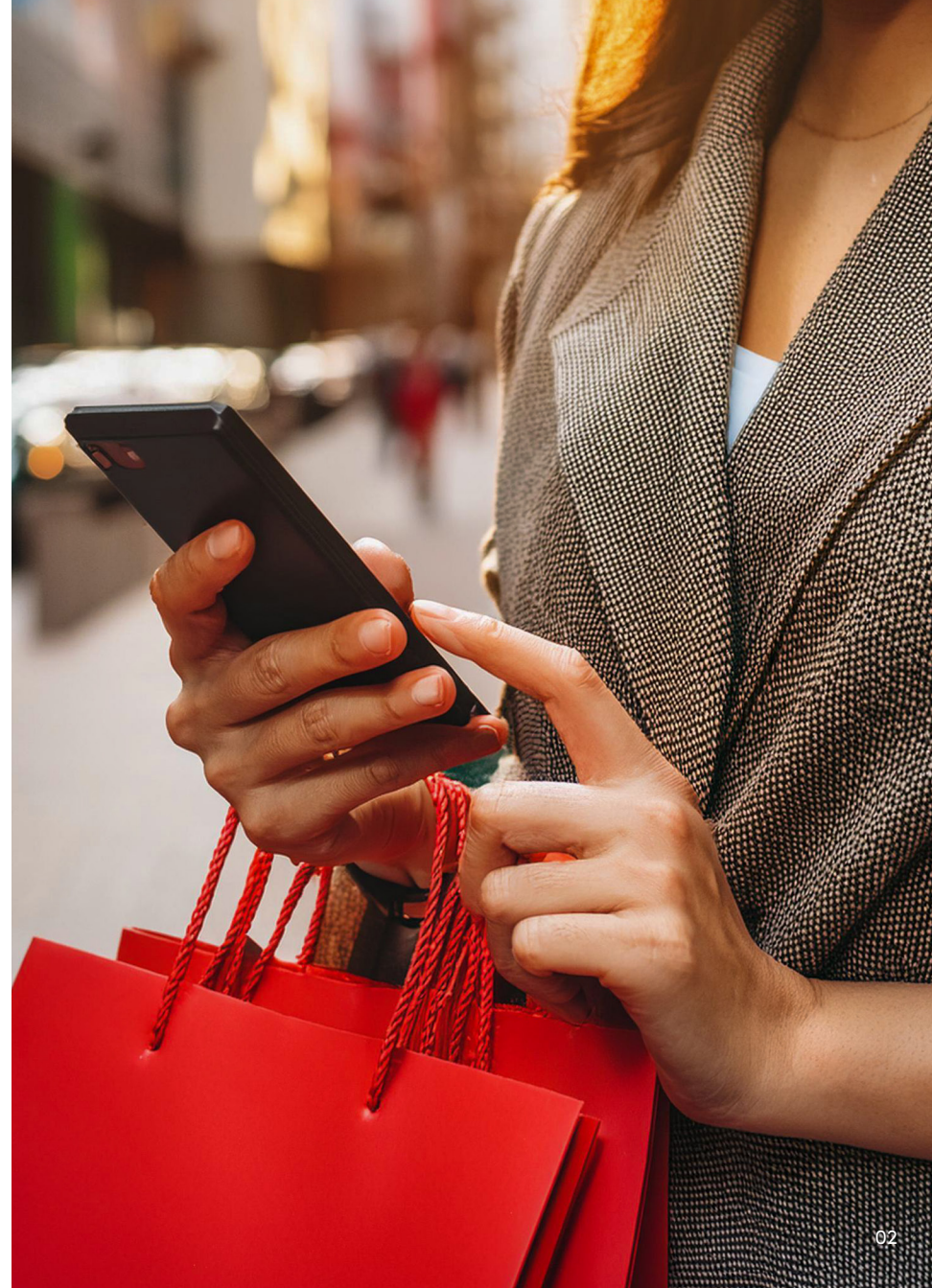
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According to the [National Retail Federation \(NRF\)](#), nearly 182 million people planned to shop online and in stores at the end of November 2023, with nearly 75% of holiday shoppers heading out during the Thanksgiving holiday period.

Online shopping has become a convenient way to explore deals before the December rush even begins. That means you'll need to start showcasing your business before people buy a turkey.

The holiday season tends to creep up the calendar sooner and sooner each year. Once upon a time, Black Friday was the start of the holiday shopping season. Consumers had plenty of time to shop and plan for gifts until Christmas morning.

In recent years, more retailers have been touting their holiday deals on social media just to get ahead of the noise from competitors. Consumers are also starting to shift. The NRF reported that nearly 59% of holiday shoppers were already browsing for gifts by the start of November, with 25% having already completed their planned purchases.



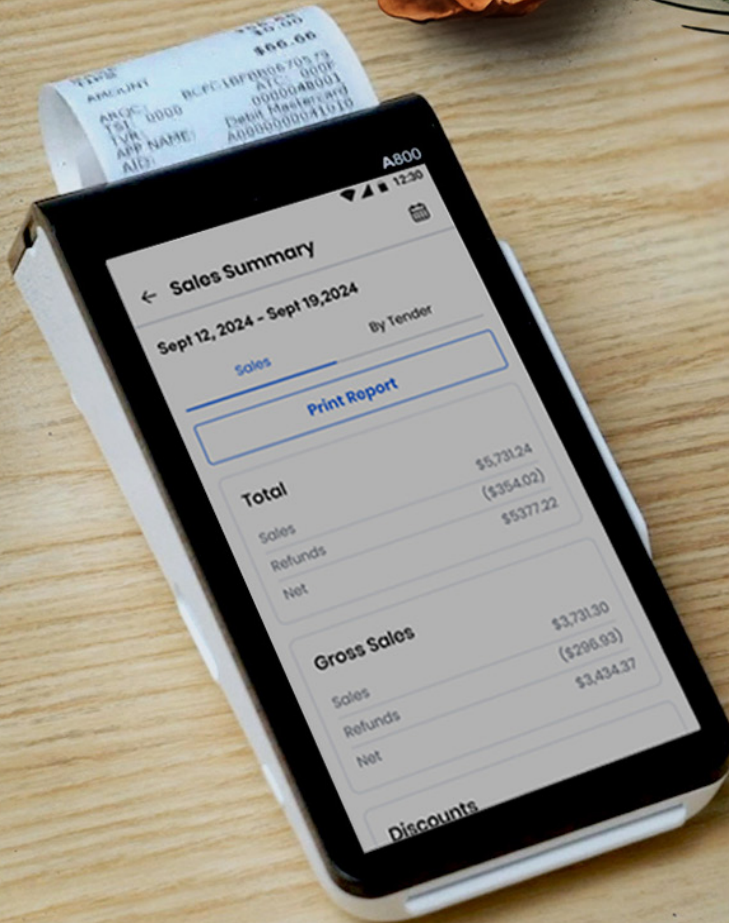
# Stock up on your best-sellers

Customers want a seamless shopping experience. And if they're anxiously searching for a gift, nothing brings more relief than seeing that item on your store shelves. Even listing best-sellers on your website as 'available' can be a green light for a completed purchase.

To help alleviate that holiday shopping rush, try placing items in high demand at the front of your store for easy access. Think of all the times you've seen customers rushing the aisles of your store for that last second gift. This slight reorganization will show customers you're a few steps ahead to meet their needs.

## TECH TIP

Access your [small business point-of-sale](#) or inventory reports from the last holiday season to determine which best-sellers need restocking and which items you can discount to potentially boost sales. Who knows? Maybe you'll set a trend for next year as well.





# Update your online business pages

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Whether we like it or not, your presence on Yelp, Google, and Facebook can make a lasting impression on potential customers. These review sites aren't just for comments about customer service or return policies.

Even if your Google Business Page has positive reviews, [regularly updating your business information](#) shows customers you're not just there to sell them your wares. Updating your business address, phone number, and email while regularly checking on your social media gives customers an open line of communication.

Here are some great ways to stay top of mind with customers and remind them to shop local with you, especially for the holidays:

- Regularly share small updates on your Google Business Page
- Offer more news and discounts through newsletters
- Sync your social media to keep posts consistent

[See how to attract more visits to your website](#)





# Spread cheer on social media

During the holiday rush, it's easy to forget the social side of social media. When you keep it personal and plan accordingly, you can set up social media campaigns for maximum exposure to customers.

Everyone gets a bit of writer's block now and then. Set aside the notepad and pencil, and try looking at how digital tools can help you brainstorm. With all the buzz going around AI tech, it won't hurt to explore how these AI tools will work best for you.

## TECH TIP

- Utilize free AI tools like [ChatGPT](#), [Gemini](#) (within Google Docs), or [Copilot](#) (within Microsoft Word) to draft your holiday social media posts faster.
- For example, try this prompt: Write 3 Instagram posts telling my customers to come in early on Black Friday for a 20% discount. Once you have the copy, edit it to your brand voice.
- Use social media templates built into [marketing automation tools](#) to easily customize and preschedule holiday posts.



# Don't shy away from interactions

Beyond posting your latest holiday sale on Instagram, interact with followers to get everyone in the festive spirit. Craft a giveaway on Instagram or host a caption contest on Facebook.

Interactive social media posts help incentivize communication with potential customers, presenting your business in a festive light. If a customer tags you in a holiday post, leave a comment and a like as thanks. Small interactions show customers your small business is run by real people.

## #HolidayShopping

Try to include some [holiday hashtags](#) in your social media posts as well. Social media sites use hashtags to categorize and promote certain posts. Use relevant words and phrases to increase traffic. It's recommended to include at least 5 hashtags per post.

For example, if you're writing an Instagram post about a sale on Santa hats, then you could include: #christmastime, #santahats, #holidaysale, #wintertime, #santa

By using hashtags, your post will then be placed alongside other posts with those exact terms and phrases. Even scrollers on the other side of the country might be tempted to buy something from your store.





## TECH TIP

Utilize email marketing software to make it faster and easier to send email promos to customers.

→ **Why SpotOn Marketing?** Unlike standalone email marketing tools, [SpotOn Marketing](#) is synced with your POS. That makes it easier to both build your mailing list by collecting emails during checkout and send email deals you can redeem during checkout.

# Make the most of your email database

Want to offer customers a last-minute deal on items you don't usually discount? Or send a holiday gift guide featuring all your seasonal best sellers? Perhaps you'd like to surprise customers with a promo code?

Sending a [well-crafted email](#) to customers is one of the most effective ways of waking some dormant shoppers out of hibernation. Only a handful of small businesses actually take advantage of emails for promotions and updates.

On the consumer side, even if shoppers are already aware of your business, they're mostly looking for a good deal on products that are worth the purchase. When shoppers see an email from your business showcasing new holiday products and deals, your business becomes top of mind.

### Don't forget these tips to make your email shine:

- Does your subject line catch the reader's attention?
- Does your email sound personal and relatable?
- Is your business name clearly on the email?
- Does your email end with a CTA link or some other action?

[Learn how to build your email database](#)



# Craft a memorable retail experience

Stepping into any store during the holiday season should be a sensory experience. Think of all the wonderful holiday smells and visuals, and use them to your advantage with seasonal candle and snowflake decorations.

Creativity is key! Create a fun selfie corner with holiday-themed props and decor. Invite customers to hang decorations on a Christmas tree after their purchase. Even placing holiday candles near products that correspond to the scent itself can liven up the retail experience. And when you see customers snapping a pic of all your holiday cheer, encourage them to tag the business as well.

Get started with these simple ways to show your appreciation:

- Write handwritten notes on customized paper
- Include free goodies with every purchase
- Always show you're open to feedback
- Reward positive reviews online

Explore some fun holiday ideas for your business





# Offer gift cards as an extra incentive

Some friends and family members are hard to buy for. It can make gift-giving a chore. That's why gift cards are a great gift option for your customers during the holiday season. Gift cards are also great for you.

On top of creating immediate cash flow for your business, gift cards encourage customers to stop by later in the year to treat themselves (or others). And don't forget that customers almost always spend more than the original value, meaning you might [see even more revenue](#) after the holidays are over.

As an added bonus, gift cards can even provide valuable insight into how your customers respond to certain holiday promotions. Data reports from your point-of-sale system will be your greatest asset here.

Compare your gift-card promotion sales from the past few years to see which one stuck the most. Did more people take up that \$10 gift card for every \$50 they spent? Did last year's offer for a free tote bag with a \$100 purchase encourage return visits? Experimenting with gift cards helps you find that sweet spot between earning profits and gift-giving.

Explore the power of gift cards



# Offer loyalty rewards

A loyalty program is a gift that keeps on giving. During the holidays, offering customers the chance to earn points and redeem them later for a discount or freebie can be what makes them shop with you rather than somewhere else. It can even incentivize shoppers to buy something they had no intention of buying in the first place.

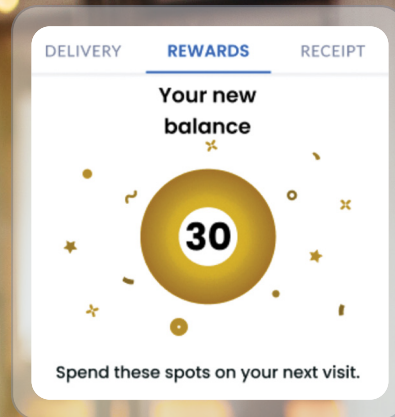
In fact, a [Harris Poll commissioned by SpotOn](#) showed that more than half of Americans (56%) admit they regularly make unexpected purchases as a result of loyalty program offerings.

While percent discounts are a classic loyalty reward, don't hesitate to get a bit more creative. [Experiential loyalty rewards](#) are a great way to show off your unique brand and build brand loyalty.

## TECH TIP

Ditch the old-school punch cards and go with a digital solution that integrates with your POS, like [SpotOn Loyalty](#).

- Make it easy for customers to enroll, check-in, and redeem loyalty points.
- Automatically import email contact info into your email database and get a second helping of profits by sending out email promos during the slow months.





# Speed up the line AND increase sales with the right tech

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Long lines are a sign business is booming. However, with the holiday rush, lines can also frustrate customers. That's why a cloud-based POS built for small businesses is crucial. The right tech has numerous advantages:

- **Faster transactions** help you to keep lines moving for more sales and better service
- **Accepting mobile payments** like ApplePay & Google Pay alongside credit cards can boost sales by 12-18%
- **Digital receipt options** reduce waste and help you grow your customer list for future marketing campaigns
- **Loyalty integration** lets you run rewards programs and grow your customer list
- **Reporting** gives you insights into your business health

There are a lot of retail POS options. If you have complex needs, like a product catalog or inventory management, you might want a complex solution.

On the other hand, if you're looking for a fast, affordable, and easy way to take payments in-store without shelling out for features you'll never use, [SpotOn Terminal](#) is the perfect solution.



# Give yourself the gift of tech

[SpotOn Terminal](#) enables any business to take payments, print receipts, and view sales reports all in one sleek payment terminal. It's portable with an offline mode and options for compliant surcharge and [dual pricing](#). Most importantly, it's fast, easy, and backed by a tech partner that actually cares about your success.

The holidays can be filled with profits and also stress. The right tech—and tech partner—can help. From getting the word out to streamlining checkout to setting yourself up for success to bring customers back after the new year, tech can handle the tedious busy work so you can do what you do best.

**Want to learn more about SpotOn Terminal?**

[Get started with a demo](#)





Technology that works  
the way you work