FireApps

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE BOOMING

2021 HOLIDAY SALES SEASON

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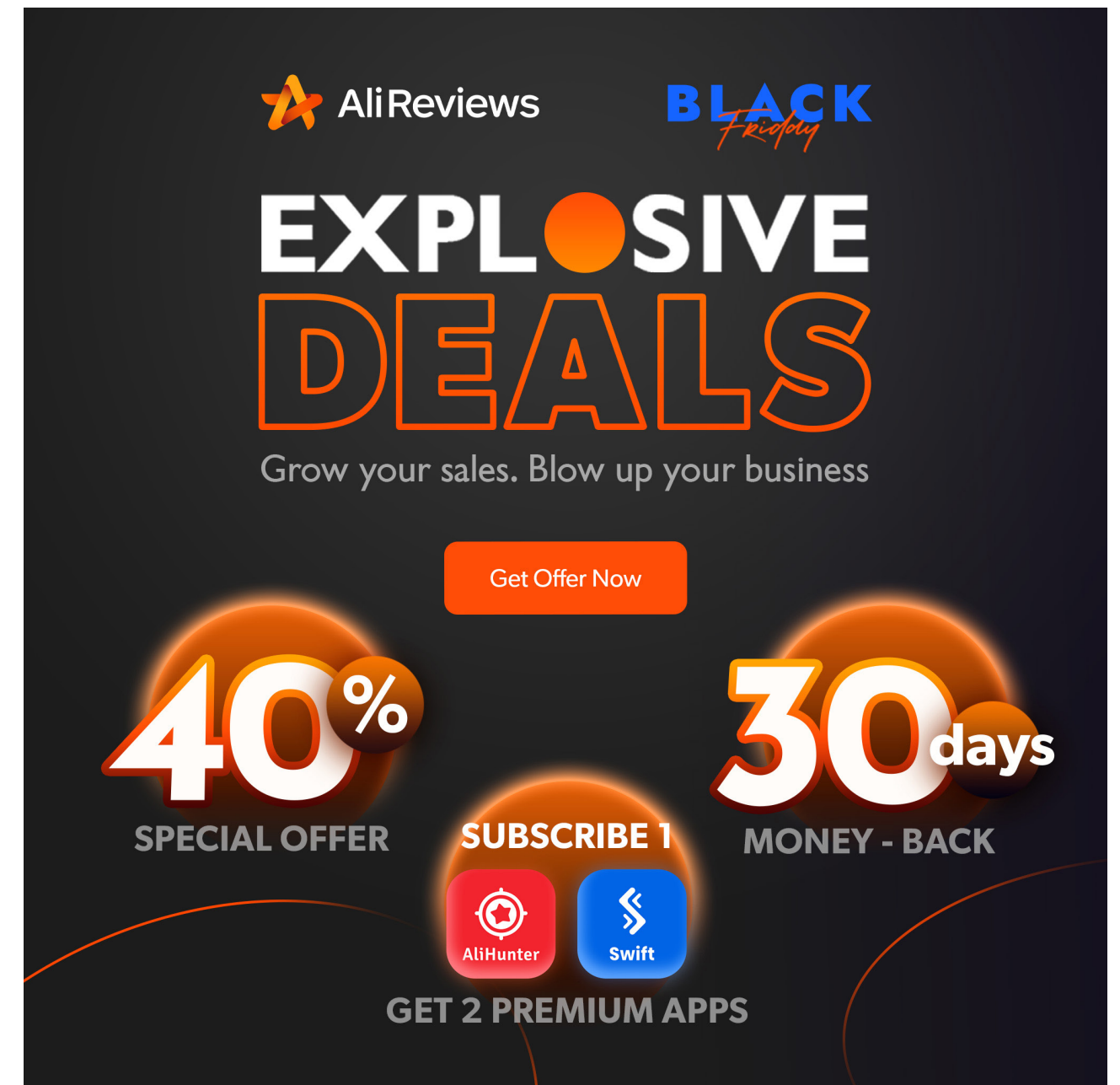
Our profound thanks will be shown via action. We're offering explosive deals on the Ali Reviews app to help you elevate your brand reputation and ramp up holiday sales with stunning customer reviews and more.

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About the Authors

Quynh Nguyen - Content Creator at FireApps

She enjoys researching the exciting world of e-commerce and crafting engaging articles to help e-commerce managers around the world make the most of their presence online.

FireApps is premium e-commerce solutions that come together to optimize your Shopify store, save valuable time and grow business faster. Founded in 2016, FireApps steadily became a powerful service provider on Shopify.

Phuc Nguyen - Content Lead at PageFly

Phuc is responsible for every word spoken, every idea delivered, every concept unfolds at PageFly Blog. He wakes up every day to the aspiration of sculpting border-less and quality content for e-commerce merchants worldwide.

PageFly is the top Shopify Page Builder, trusted by more than 100,000 Shopify and Shopify Plus merchants. PageFly brings you a complete package to build and optimize your store with just simple drag-and-drop; creates a seamless digital experience across devices; strong compatibility with other Shopify apps to boost sales.

Haley - Content Creator at AVADA Commerce

With experience writing for audiences such as technical professionals, business owners, market researchers, email marketers, and more, she helps companies address prospects and consumers for a new generation of marketing. Every company has a story to tell the world, and the key to success is to tell it well. Haley can help make sure your content is getting the message across.

AVADA Commerce Pte. Ltd. is an e-commerce solution provider, headquartered in Singapore, Sales and development team in the USA and Vietnam where the best developers unite. Founded in 2014, AVADA is responsible for completing the mission to help 1 million online businesses grow revenues. AVADA team works for one ultimate thing - customer satisfaction.

Joan Nguyen - Content Marketing Executive at UpPromote

Joan enjoys writing about e-commerce, technology, industry trends, and tips & tricks to assist merchants in starting and growing their businesses.

Affiliate Marketing is one of the potential apps in the Secomapp system. Founded in 2013, Secomapp has more than 7 years of experience in building Shopify Apps with high ranks and impressive ratings. Secomapp promises to bring customers' experience to the next level with easy-to-use, powerful, feature-rich apps to rocket sales.

We all love holidays, don't we? Holidays bring in the time to connect, share and embrace quality moments with our friends and family. Also the sales on almost every product also becomes appealing for spendings. Businesses announce discounted prices for various products. People in a huge number apply for coupons and deals.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way we live, work and enjoy holidays. Retail businesses have suffered while online shopping has grown up. Despite a global pandemic there is only a slight drop in the holiday spendings as consumers are finding ways to bring down the tensed environment that the pandemic has created. With no doubt holidays are the time that we all wait the whole year.

The holidays are quickly approaching, and we all know how important they are for business. Every holiday presents an opportunity to stand out and leave a lasting impression. The most wonderful time of the year can be even better when your business is booming.

This year, in order to help you get well prepared, we have a gift for you. Here is our latest ebook *"How to prepare for the booming 2021 Holiday Sales Season"*.

Introduction

To help you maximize the season, we've pulled together some of our most effective strategies and tactics in this collection of resources to help expose your brand to more customers and increase sales during this peak season, including:

1. History and Statistics of the 5 Most Profitable Days of Holiday Sales Season 2020: Halloweens, Thanksgiving, Black Friday, Cyber Monday and Christmas
2. 2021 Holiday Sales Season Forecasts and Predictions
3. How to prepare for the booming 2021 Holiday Sales Season with 4 steps: (1) Inventory - (2) Promotion - (3) Social & Content - (4) Shipping, Handling & Customer Services
4. 12 best Shopify apps for boosting sales in Holiday Season

LET'S CHECK IT OUT!

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Chapter 1:

History & Statistics of the 5 Most Profitable Days of Holiday Sales Season 2020

Source: Unsplash

If you own an e-commerce business and are looking to thrive this holiday season at the end of this year, you must target the most profitable days. So what are those days? Below lists some basic and most commercial occasions which most of thebusinesses target during the holiday season sales.

1.1 Halloween - October 31, 2021

Halloween is a celebration observed in many countries on 31 October, the eve of the Western Christian feast of All Hallows' Day. Halloween activities include trick-or-treating, attending Halloween costume parties, carving pumpkins into jack-o'-lanterns, lighting bonfires, apple bobbing, divination games, playing pranks, visiting haunted attractions, telling scary stories, as well as watching horror films.

The Halloween season is a great time to prepare your marketing campaigns. Despite the COVID-19 outbreak, consumers are looking forward to new ways to enjoy Halloween in the coming weeks and months.

- In 2019, the average spend on Halloween was $86.27, including decorations, costumes, candy, and cosmetics.
- According to the National Retail Federation's annual survey performance by Prosper Insights & Analytics, over 148 million adults in the US expect to engage in Halloween-related events. Top of the list was decorating the house, carving pumpkins, and dressing up pets.
- Most people intend to spend $92.12 on Halloween to make it memorable. They spend more on décor, candy, and greeting cards.
- People begin their Halloween shopping in September or even earlier.
- Discount stores, Halloween specialty stores, grocery stores, and online stores are some of the most popular shopping destinations in the world. During the epidemic, more than 30 percent of customers prefer to purchase online because of convenience and safety.
- As for costumes, more than 2.7 million kids love princess costumes, followed by their favorite superheroes and spider-man. Meanwhile, adults plan to dress up as witches, vampires, and cats. The popularity of pet apparel continues to grow.

Source: Unsplash

1.2 Thanksgiving - November 25, 2021

Thanksgiving is a national holiday celebrated on various dates in the United States, Canada, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Liberia. It began as a day of giving thanks and sacrifice for the blessing of the harvest and of the preceding year. Thanksgiving is celebrated on the second Monday of October in Canada and on the fourth Thursday of November in the United States and around the same part of the year in other places.

Thanksgiving is a very important holiday for Americans, who attend various events and prepare delicious meals based on pumpkins and turkey. The whole point of Thanksgiving is to gather with family members and express gratitude for everything good in life.

Thanksgiving is quickly approaching along with Black Friday – the official start of holiday shopping. You should be seriously considering your Thanksgiving marketing strategy.

- Thanksgiving Day spending rose by 21.5% year over year to $5.1 billion, hitting a new record, according to Adobe Analytics data.
- Online sales were $4.2 billion on Thanksgiving Day in 2019. Nearly half of those purchases were made on a smartphone, according to Adobe.
- Retailers that offer curbside pickup had a 31% higher conversion rate of traffic to their sites. More consumers are avoiding malls and buying gifts from their couch during the pandemic

1.3 Black Friday - November 26, 2021

Black Friday is the Friday following Thanksgiving Day in the United States. Many stores offer high-ly promoted sales on Black Friday and open very early or some time on Thanksgiving Day. Black Friday has routinely been the busiest shopping day of the year in the United States since 2005.

Source: Unsplash

Lots of stores and brands offer their customers discounts and other incentives to shop through Black Friday marketing campaigns. Here are Black Friday 2020 Sales Statistics:

- The actual Black Friday 2020 revenue sits at $188.2 billion. (Adobe, 2020)
- Traffic numbers for physical stores were down 42.3% in 2020. (RetailNext via Forbes, 2020)
- The online Holiday purchases in the US in 2020 grew 32.2% compared to 2019. (Adobe via CNBC, 2021)
- Online sales on Black Friday rose to about 22% YoY to $9 billion. (Adobe via CNBC, 2020)
- Smartphones increasingly accounted for a portion of online sales up 25.3% at $3.6 billion. (TechCrunch, 2020)
- 70% of sales made on Shopify were made via smartphones. (TechCrunch, 2020)
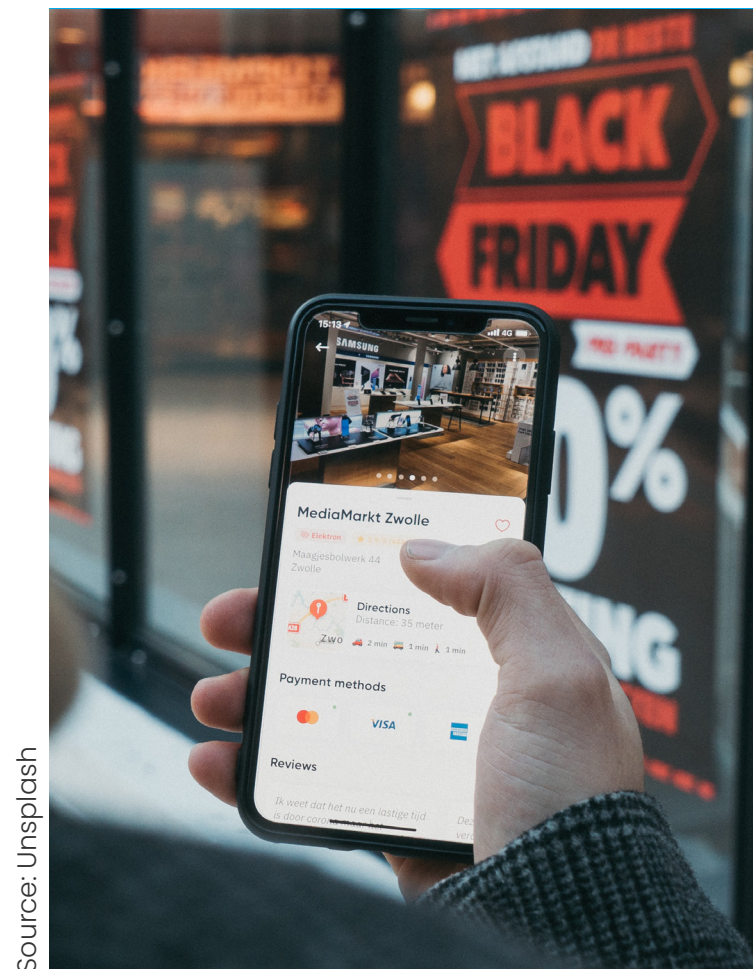
Source: Unsplash

Source: Unsplash

1.4 Cyber Monday - November 29, 2021

Cyber Monday is the first Monday after the Thanksgiving holiday, the term was coined in 2005. It's a 24-hour online shopping event and often known as an extension of the Black Friday sale. It was created by retailers to encourage people to shop online.

Now what started as a one-day event has become a four-day shopping event starting on Black Friday and ending on Cyber Monday. Since its inception, it has become an international marketing term used by online retailers across the world.

- Cyber Monday on November 30, 2020 was the biggest online shopping day in U.S. history with a total of $10.7 billion in online spending.
- In 2020, e-commerce sales during November including Cyber Monday reached $100 billion for the first time. (Adobe via CNBC, 2021)
- 37% of digital sales on Cyber Monday were made on mobile devices. (Adobe via CNBC, 2020)
- Online sales have reached $10 billion on Cyber Monday. This is the biggest ecommerce day in US history. (Adobe via CNBC, 2020)

1.5 Christmas - December 25, 2021

Christmas is an annual festival commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, observed primarily on December 25 as a religious and cultural celebration by billions of people around the world. Christmas Day is a public holiday in many countries, is celebrated religiously by a majority of Christians, as well as culturally by many non-Christians, and forms an integral part of the holiday season organized around it.

Popular modern customs of the holiday include gift giving; Christmas music and caroling; an exchange of Christmas cards; church services; a special meal; and the display of various Christmas decorations, including Christmas trees, Christmas lights, nativity scenes, garlands, wreaths, mistletoe, and holly. In addition, several closely related and often interchangeable figures, known as Santa Claus, Father Christmas, Saint Nicholas, and Christkind, are associated with bringing gifts to children during the Christmas season.

Because gift-giving and many other aspects of the Christmas festival involve heightened economic activity, the holiday has become a significant event and a key sales period for retailers and businesses. Here are Top 10 Christmas Spending Statistics for 2020:

- Despite the pandemic, there was an increase in holiday sales by 8.3%.
- 17% of American parents spare no expense when it comes to Christmas gifts.
- 25% of Americans planned to do their Christmas shopping early in 2020.
- $15.2 billion is the estimated total of unwanted presents.
- 40% of Americans planned to cut their Christmas spending in 2020.
- In 2020, Americans planned to spend an average of $998 on Christmas gifts.

Chapter 2:

2021 Holiday Sales Season Forecasts and Predictions

Source: Unsplash

As retailers, predicting the future is part of the job description. You need to know what your customers want before they want it. And you have to be able to see trends and spot pitfalls before they happen. Otherwise, you can wind up with heaps of dead inventory and major financial issues.

Now that we're headed into the busiest time of year, it's time to take a look into the metaphorical crystal ball. Here are our top holiday shopping predictions for 2021:

- One of the country's top retail trade groups said the global health crisis won't dampen enthusiasm for shopping.
- The National Retail Federation estimated holiday sales will rise between 3.6% and 5.2% year over year, amounting to between $755.3 billion and $766.7 billion. Last year, they rose 4% to $729.1 billion, NRF said. On average, holiday sales have increased 3.5% for the past five years.
- The trade group, however, said it expects more of those dollars will be spent online, rather than in stores. It projected a 20% to 30% jump in online and other non-store sales compared to last year.
- Adobe said it anticipates Black Friday and Cyber Monday to be the two largest online sales days in history. It expects Black Friday sales will add up to between $8.9 billion and $10.6 billion and online sales for the full holiday season will add up to $189 billion.
- Holiday shopping will start sooner. The 2020 peak season was strange for many reasons, but the most notable one was the early start. More businesses will jump on the early deals bandwagon and customers will get their shopping done earlier to beat the crowds and shipping delays common to the holiday season.
- Shoppers want free shipping. As big e-commerce brands like Amazon continue to offer free shipping to their Prime members, consumers are getting more and more attached to the "free shipping" label. Heading into the 2021 peak season, it will be important for retailers and e-commerce brands to find ways to lower that shipping cost to zero.
- Shoppers will embrace mobile commerce. According to Business Insider, mobile commerce (m-commerce) is predicted to account for 36% of all e-commerce sales this year. And currently, mobile apps are converting customers 157% more often than mobile website counterparts. Simply that mobile commerce needs to be at the heart of your peak season strategy.
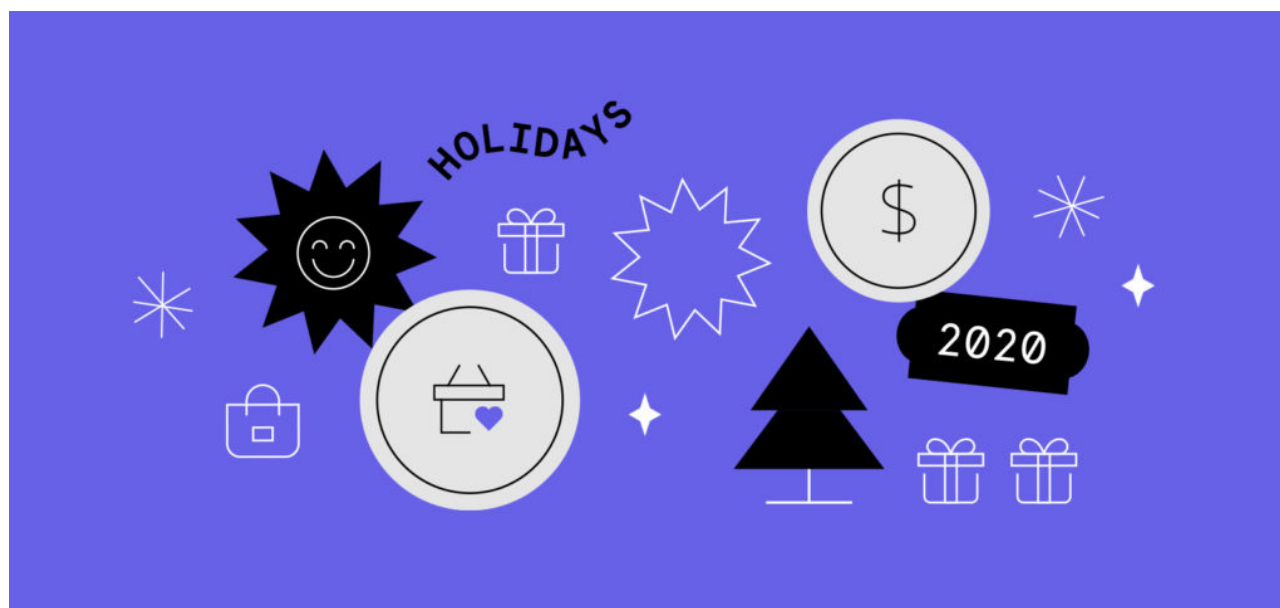
Chapter 3:

How to prepare for the booming 2021 Holiday Sales Season

3.1 Inventory

3.1.1 Develop a holiday marketing plan and set your seasonal goals

Source: nosto.com

Here are 4 simple steps to start your holiday marketing plan. We'll talk about planning, preparing, executing and tracking your online holiday sales.

3.1.1.1 Planning for Online Holiday Sales

Recap your previous year's holiday campaign: You need to note what went well and examine what didn't work. This will give you precious insights on what is worth redoing, what is worth reexamining and adjusting and what is worth abandoning.

Think about your plan for this year: What products or services do you want to promote? Who do you want to target with this promotion? How are you going to stand out from other online shops doing the same?

3.1.1.2 Preparing for Online Holiday Sales

Set up your e-commerce store: You can choose to code your own store or take advantage of hosting websites. Our recommendation for starters is Shopify, a popular e-commerce platform that helps you build your own online store, without needing any tech skills.

Focus on your timing: Prepare a comprehensive holiday promotion calendar. This calendar should tie back to all the holidays you've decided to concentrate on, as well as your set of goals.

Work with your strategy in 3 key aspects:

- Pre-launch: Period during which your business builds up excitement for the coming promotion. This should start at least 2 weeks before the actual launch.
- Launch: The launch of your promotion. It's always a good idea to couple the limited offer with a countdown timer to help convert that FOMO into cold hard cash.
- Post-launch debriefing & follow-up: This is usually the 3-5 days after your promotion in which you will assess how well it went and follow up any leads that were generated during the promotion.

Decide the timing of your promotion: This depends on the type of product or service you are selling and whether they fit with the type of buyer who'll make a purchase well before the holiday or those who impulse buy during the peak of the holiday shopping window.

Plan for potential pitfalls or pressure points that might derail your campaign.

3.1.1.3 Executing Online Holiday Sales

Activate your campaigns across different channels, e.g. an online store, a seasonal landing page or e-commerce markets. And don't forget to monitor ad-hoc issues.

3.1.1.4 Tracking Online Holiday Sales

The tracking stage is all about making adjustments to maximise engagement while the holiday is still happening. By implementing this step you'll be able to track exactly how your pages are performing and be able to swap out those pages that aren't performing as they should. Google Analytics never gets old!

3.1.2 Secure sufficient working capital

During the holidays, it may be necessary to have more funds readily available to increase inventory, hire seasonal staff or set up holiday displays. Talk to your banker or local community lender about securing a line of credit or short-term loan. Many lenders have reasonable interest rates and repayment terms, as well as quick turnarounds from approval to funding. And the advice is you have to be sure that you know what you're signing up for before you agree to any loans or lines of credit.

Fast financing is expensive financing. Get the capital you need well in advance to keep your debt costs down. Whether you're late to the game or just in time, here are a few financing methods to consider:

- Business Line of Credit: A business line of credit gives you a financial safety net that you can keep in your back pocket. Tap into it to cover gaps in your cash flow and keep your inventory stocked, or keep it around in case of an emergency.
- Inventory Financing: Use inventory financing to purchase the products you need to sell, even if your cash is low at the moment. The products serve as collateral for the loan, making it easy to qualify.
- Merchant Cash Advance: Trade your future income for cash today with a merchant cash advance. A merchant cash advance gives you a loan now that you'll repay using a portion of your daily sales. When cash is low, but you know major sales are around the corner, a merchant cash advance can help you stock up on inventory ahead of time.

Source: Unsplash

3.1.3 Optimize your seasonal landing pages to maximize sales

3.1.3.1 Overview of seasonal landing pages

- A seasonal landing page is an online store's standalone page that attracts visitors and ushers them towards a seasonal/holiday sale.
- If you plan your new season's lines many months in advance, it's a mistake not to prepare your on-site campaign pages in a similar manner.
- The danger of only creating, and marketing, your seasonal landing pages at the last minute, is that your competitors may well have been doing so all year round, so they'll be well ahead of you when it comes to organic traffic and search engine rankings for relevant search terms.
- A well-optimised landing page could make all the difference to an upcoming seasonal campaign and for many years to come

3.1.3.2 How to get started?

Option 1: Get professional service from a freelance site such as Fiverr or Upwork. They'll create your landing page and even your entire store for you, all for a fraction of the price you'll get from your e-commerce holiday sales.

The flip side: You can't address immediate changes if you wish to. Having certain coding knowledge to quality control the freelancer's work is also a barrier.
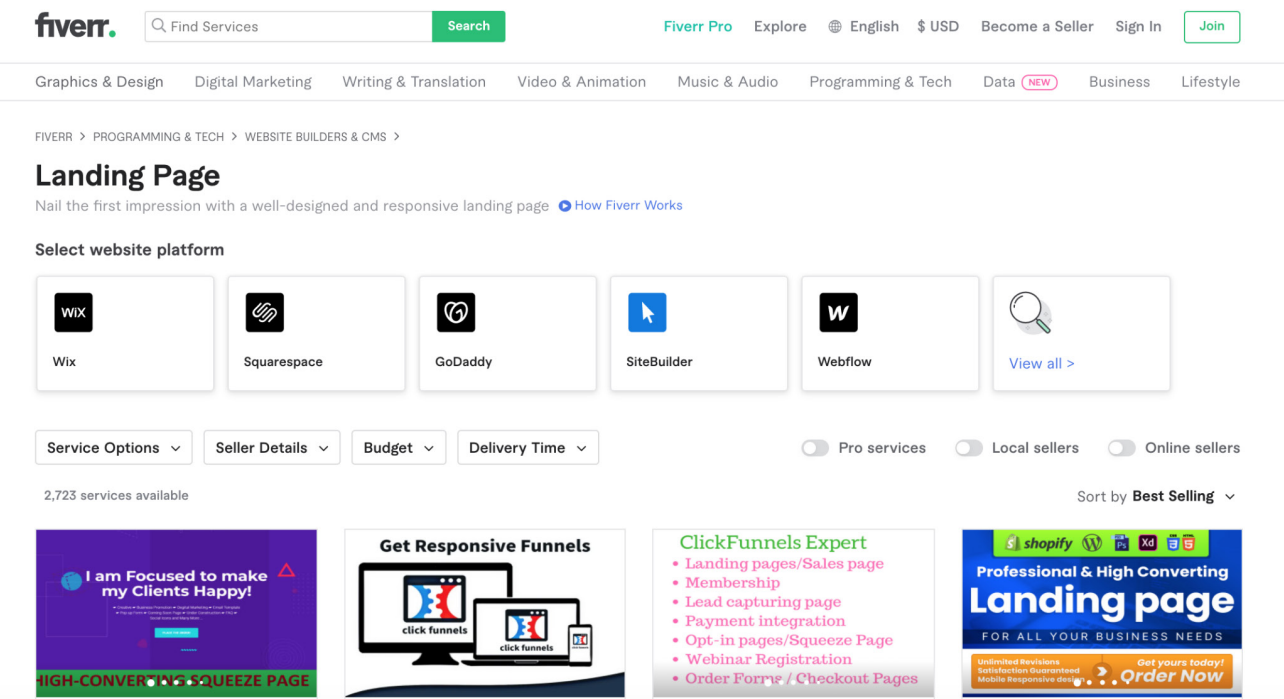
Source: Fiverr

Option 2: Build your seasonal landing pages with a hosting platform and a page builder service. Shopify and PageFly make a perfect combo for this. While Shopify gives you a functional store, PageFly, the highest-rated page builder on the Shopify app store, makes optimizing your store easy, fun and free with a simple drag and drop system.

For a start, PageFly provides attractive, high-converting templates to maximize seasonal sales and beyond. There's an enormous library of free templates for you to choose from.
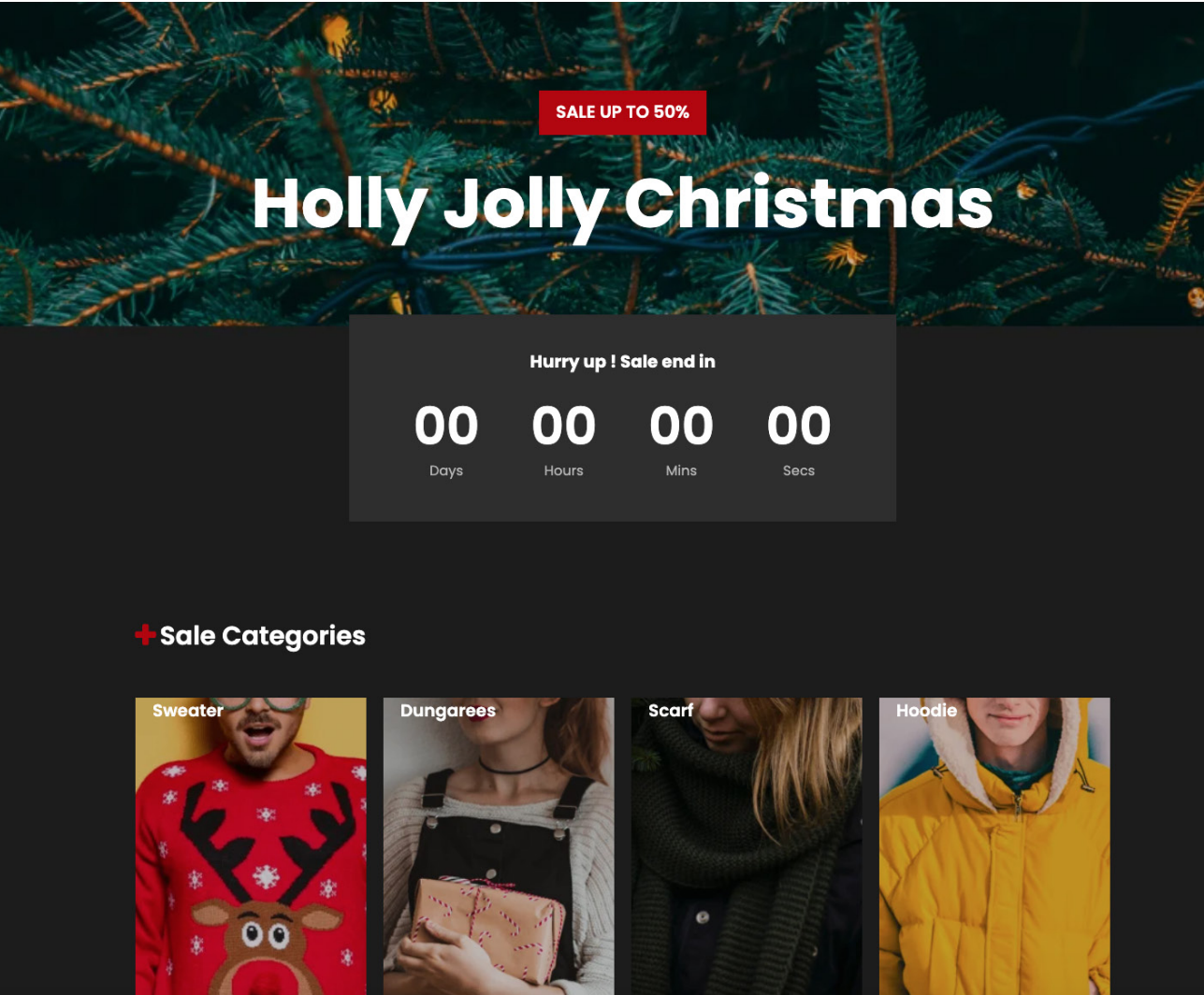
Christmas Sale template

Sparkling template

3.1.3.4 Key things to an efficient seasonal landing page

1. Great Design

This can be achieved by wisely arranging the layout, the color palette and different media such as photos or videos of your landing page. One basic principle is to stay true to the spirit of the holiday. It would be quite misleading and pointless if you opt to have a St. Patrick-themed, all green all booze kind of design for a Valentine's day landing page and vice versa.

Try and find the perfect balance of whitespace and colour to emphasise the appeal of the headings, images and call-to-action buttons that you want your visitors to focus on. You should also consider removing distracting factors, even the header and footer, to keep visitors focused on the call-to-action that you're trying to promote.

Some ideas for you to try out:

- **Create interactive images:** Design banners and pop-ups that include information about a major site-wide sale or a significant sale on an entire product category.
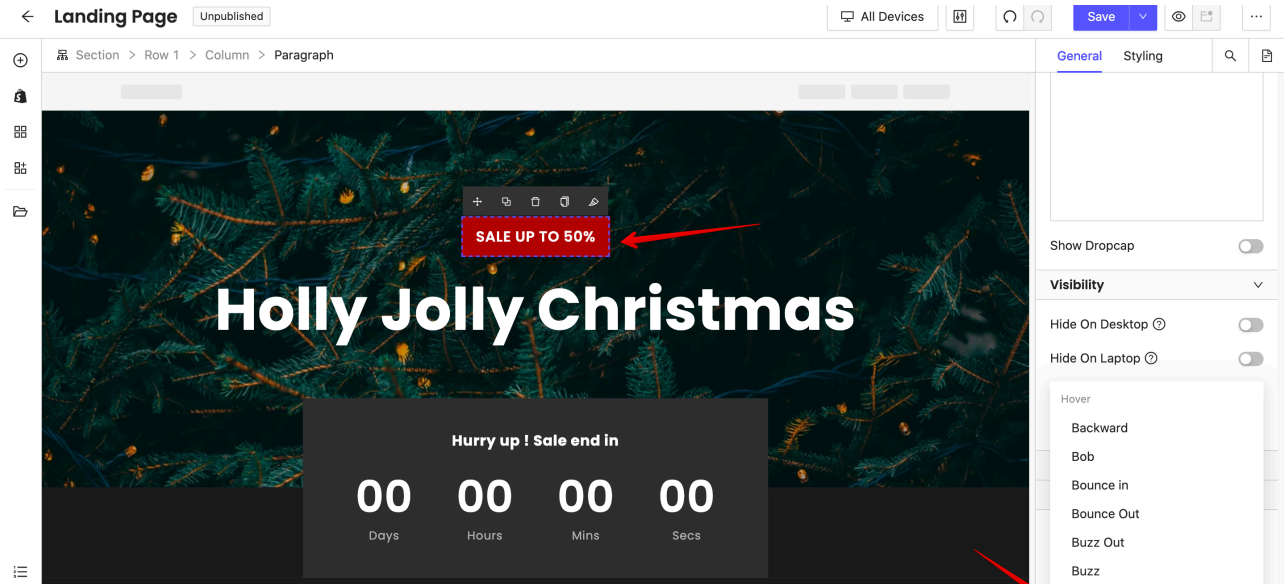
Diverse animation for banners (PageFly)
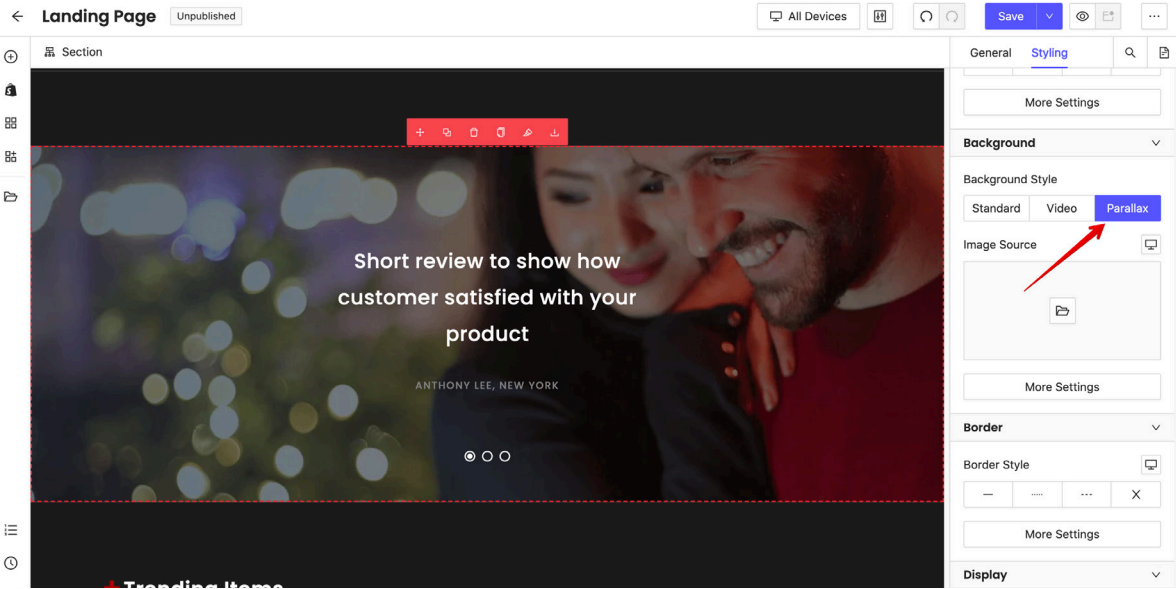
Parallax Scrolling (PageFly)

- Keep your messaging clear: Make sure that your website messaging is crystal clear, especially for the CTAs. It should convey the benefits the customers would avail by purchasing your products or services.
- Use video: Videos not only make your page look more interactive but also help you demonstrate your product usage better.
- Add personalized greetings for holidays: Use personalized greetings messages and eye-catchers on the live chat widget to grab the attention of the website visitors and encourage them to browse through the holiday deals.

2. Urgency and FOM

Seasonal sales are all about urgent occasions. Each holiday happens just once per year and the closer we get to the big day, the urgency for gifting gets stronger. The Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is incredibly powerful in commerce, especially to millennial buyers as they become increasingly uncomfortable with their purchasing decisions for fear of better options out there. Check out a few ways you can employ FOMO on your landing pages:

- **Countdown Timer:** Show a timer rolling backwards which communicates how much time remains before a given action should be taken. This helps to encourage customers to make decisions quickly and take action promptly when they visit your store.
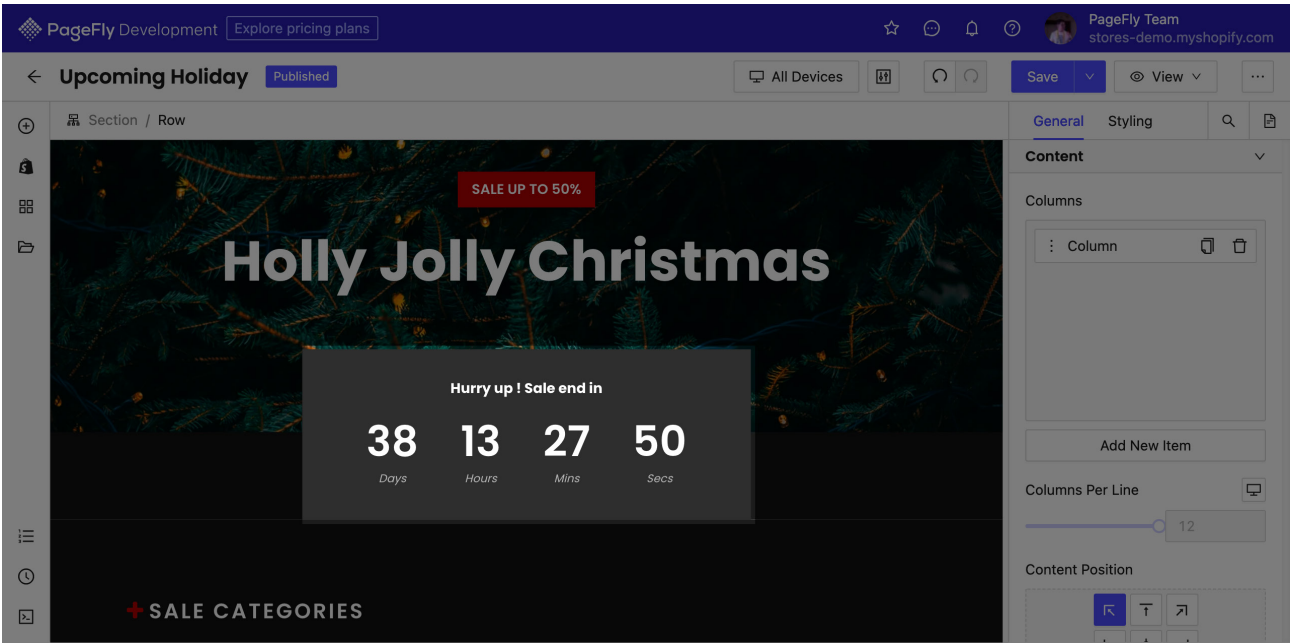
- **Catchy Product Badge:** The product image element is designed to display images of your products on your page. Inside the product image, the product badge will help you to promote your product via a discount and stock scarcity (revealing just a small number of products left).
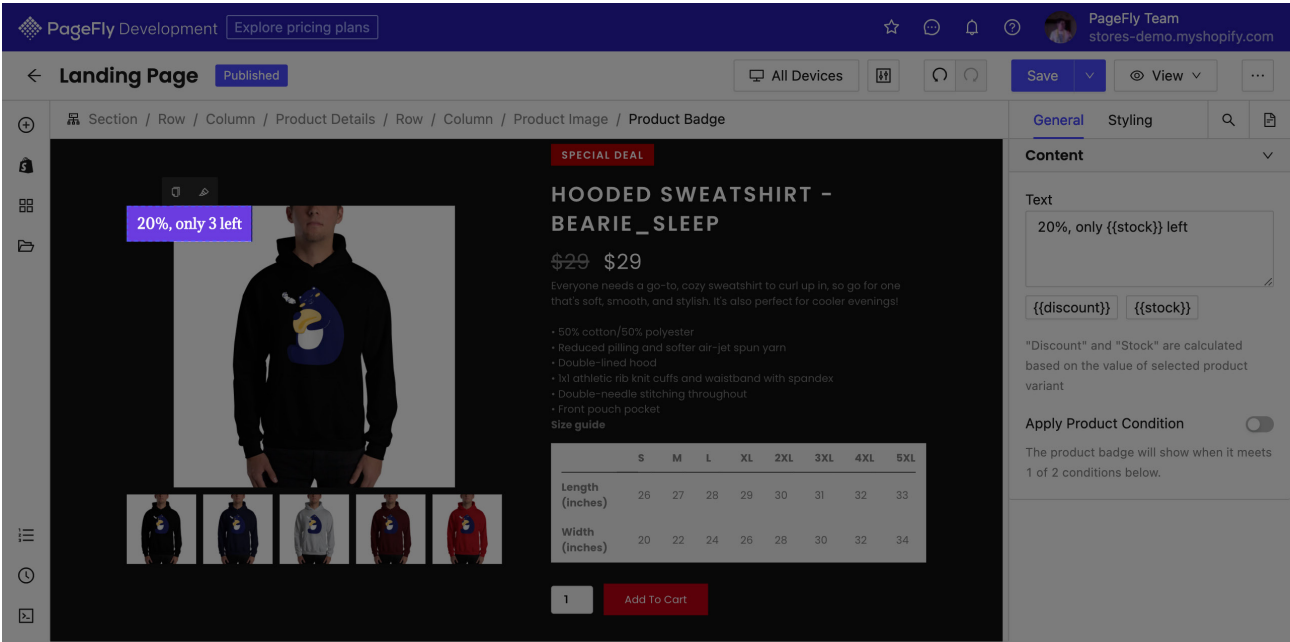
- **Social Proof:** It's truly important for your store to have customer reviews and testimonials. Basically, they help to convince visitors about the product's quality and ultimately increase your conversion rate. A winning testimonial should include a bio paragraph, location, professional title or expertise. (Example: BioClarity)
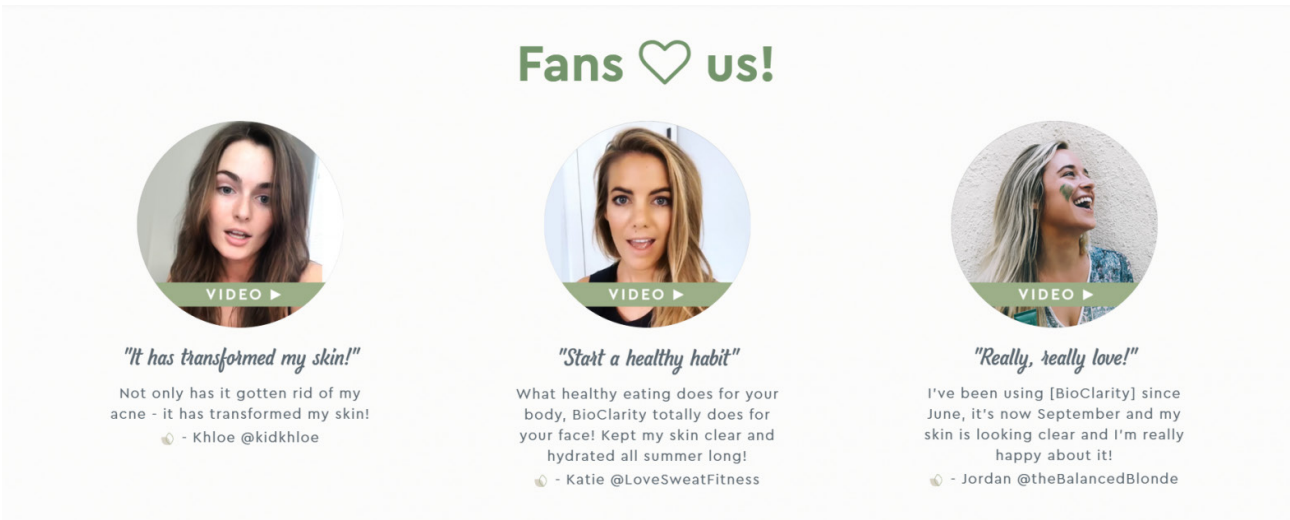
- **Play with your copy:** Focus on numbers and the urgency of time, for example:
  ◇ Stock scarcity: e.g. 'Only 3 left in stock!'
  ◇ View counter: e.g. '6 people are currently viewing this item!'
  ◇ Countdown timer: e.g. 'Just 4 days left on this deal!'
  ◇ Early buyer rewards: e.g. 'First 100 buyers get a free plush toy!'

3. Optimizing for mobile

Mobile e-commerce sales account for 34.5% of total e-commerce sales in 2017, and by 2021, that number is expected to hit 54%. Plus, Google now uses your site's mobile content to evaluate it and rank it in search engines, making mobile-first mentality a must for all online merchants who want to win holiday sales. That means you have to work closely with, say, your web coder to make sure all edits are synchronized across different devices. Some page builders like PageFly offer mobile view mode right from the editor settings.
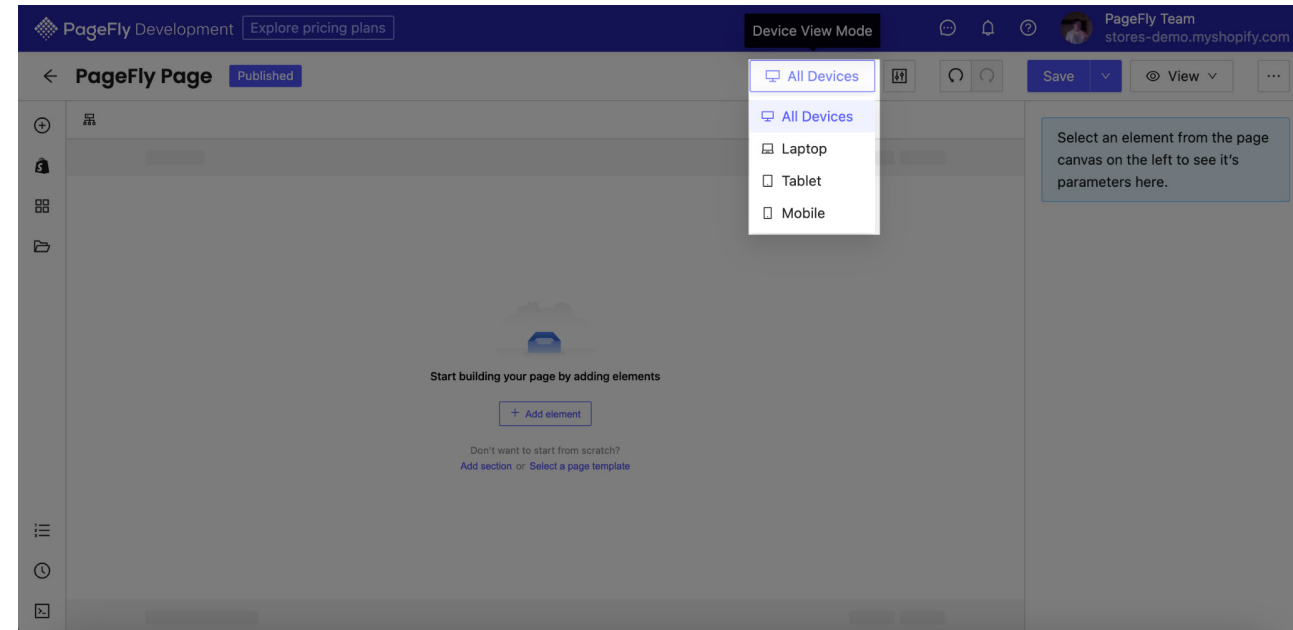
4. Discounts and Free Shipping

Discounts: On holiday landing pages, discounts are usually what make or break the deal. There are many types of discounts that you can look into, including buy-one-get-one discounts, bundle discounts, bulk discounts and first time customer discounts. *It's important that your holiday landing page displays the discounts clearly. You can use a wide banner to centralize the message or place it in a big bold call to action button.*

Free Shipping: Free shipping is a requirement for holiday shopping. Customers are more likely to buy when a free or discounted shipping offer is available, and more likely to abandon a shopping cart when it is not. Some popular free shipping policies that are worth examining include Free Shipping for Every Order, Free, Slow Shipping, Free Shipping Threshold, Second Item Earns Free Shipping, Free Shipping on Next Order and Free Shipping for Members.

3.1.4 Launch holiday special edition products

Now that you know the importance of seasonal sales and some marketing basics, it's time to get the most out of the coming holiday sales peaks. Here are some holidays that you might want to benefit from, and some product ideas for your online store.

3.1.4.1 Halloween – October 31, 2021

Since not many people can go out and trick or treat as usual, your stores should focus more on decorations, simple costumes and activities to deal with children staying at home.

- Banners
- Lanterns
- Kids' costumes
- Craft kits

3.1.4.2 Black Friday and Cyber Monday – November 26 and 29, 2021

The two biggest shopping days of the year are finally on the horizon, and customers looking to save some serious cash are planning right now.

A solid rule of thumb is that Black Friday is a better time to buy newer, big-ticket items. It's also the best day to shop in stores, though you can also shop online. Cyber Monday is a better day to shop for tech deals and smaller gifts.

- Headphones
- Laptop Cases
- Power Banks
- Watches
- Phone Holders
- Earrings
- Rings

3.1.4.3 Christmas and New Year – December 25, 2021

Christmas and New Year are a slow symphony of shopping. This starts as early as August rush towards the last couple of days in December. You can sell pretty much anything for Christmas and New Year. However, people all over the world are usually going to need decoration and tableware.

- Fairy lights
- Stockings
- Christmas kitchenware
- Christmas clothing

3.1.5 Stock up in advance on holiday inventory

Source: Unsplash

The holiday season has a tendency to creep up quickly and it often leads to challenges with inventory management. If you are not prepared for the holiday sales spike, it can lead to frustrated customers and a loss in potential revenue.

There is nothing worse than running out of the must-have gift and having to turn away a new customer. To avoid this scenario, make sure that your online store is fully stocked and that you have plenty of your bestsellers readily available. Fortunately, there are a lot of things you can do now to better prepare for the holidays. Follow these tips to nail your inventory game.

3.1.5.1 Mark and keep up with your calendar

The first rule of holiday inventory management is to not let the holidays sneak up on you. Do keep your organization in the loop, especially your marketing and e-commerce holiday ad teams, so they are prepared to run campaigns. Here are some of the 2021 holiday dates to make note of:

- Halloweens - October 31, 2021
- Thanksgiving - November 25, 2021
- Black Friday - November 26, 2021
- Cyber Monday - November 29, 2021
- Christmas - December 25, 2021

3.1.5.2 Place orders in advance

Use forecasting to get a reasonable estimate of demand. If you've been in business for at least a couple of years, look at your historical data. If you are a newcomer, simply doing some online research, including social media, can help you get a grasp on what items in your store are in high demand this season.

- Use historical sales data analytics to predict and figure out what kind of advance ordering you need to do to ensure you have the stock on hand to handle your orders surge.
- Check out social media to see what the current demand trends are. And then you can estimate inventory based on expected needs. Leverage advanced bulk orders to get the best pricing.
- Using historical inventory data like SKU performance, you will likely have an idea of what will be your top sellers, which will help you make better estimates before ordering more inventory.
- Remember to take into account current worldwide and local economic factors. Due to COVID-19, holiday shopping will be a little different this year.

3.1.5.3 Set inventory levels

Carefully planning inventory puts your business in a much more comfortable position to deal with the increased demand during the busy shopping periods. With proper planning, you should know exactly what inventory levels you need to manage this busy season.

Plan ahead to better respond to market demand, and ensure inventory stays above minimum levels. During the holiday season, it is recommended that you increase reorder points and your reorder quantity to cover a spike in sales.

3.1.5.4 Implement inventory management

Keeping track of your stock is vital – especially during the holidays. Manage your inventory, don't let it manage you. Find a system that works for you, and stick with it. Tracking your inventory stock is crucial, so you must have a good system in place, consider using modern software. An inventory management software platform will do it all for you. This system will ensure goods are available when customers order, and it will prevent overstocking.

3.1.5.5 Be vigilant with suppliers

As demand significantly increases over the holiday period, it is important to let your suppliers and vendors know in advance. Keeping close contact with your suppliers is critical during the holiday season. Inform them in advance what your needs are so they can make the proper plans to support you as well.

Share data so they understand what your needs are, and collaborate to overcome potential supply challenges. Share information on predicted order volume to make sure you order enough to avoid potential stockouts. Like you, they also need time to successfully deliver orders. Seek long-term deals and discuss bulk buys to secure better pricing.

3.1.5.6 Run inventory audits

Maintain a better assessment of inventory levels and replenish inventory as needed. Run more inventory audits during the holiday season to catch any potential problems early.

An inventory audit is a process of cross-checking your financial records to make sure they match your inventory counts. While auditing your stock, take note of what's hot and what's not. What's been sitting on the shelf the longest? How about the shortest? What needs to be cleared out so you can make space for new products?

# 3.2 Promotion

3.2.1 Scale your ads budget effectively

3.2.1.1 Scale your ads budget effectively

Q4 is always a crazy time for businesses as it's the most important time of year for most of them. It's surely not an ideal time to sit back and enjoy morning coffee. Instead it's time for one last push. Digital ads have become crucial for advertising in the last decade if not the main channels. Spending money on ads is easy but to spend it successfully is a completely different story. In this section, we will walk you through step by step for a successful digital ads campaign.

1. Look at last year's number

Before planning for this year's ads campaign, be sure to take a good look at your last performance. Data is hugely important in digital marketing in general and even more important in digital advertising. What was your average spend? Which channels performed the best and the worst? Which offers clicked with your audience? What did competitors do? If you want to know where your money is going, tracking is a must.

Look over this information to figure out where to focus your efforts this year. For example, if Facebook Ads had a horrible ROI last year, focus instead on platforms like Google Ads. If you haven't already set up tracking for your PPC campaigns, do it right now. This is essential to measuring your performance and optimizing for next year.
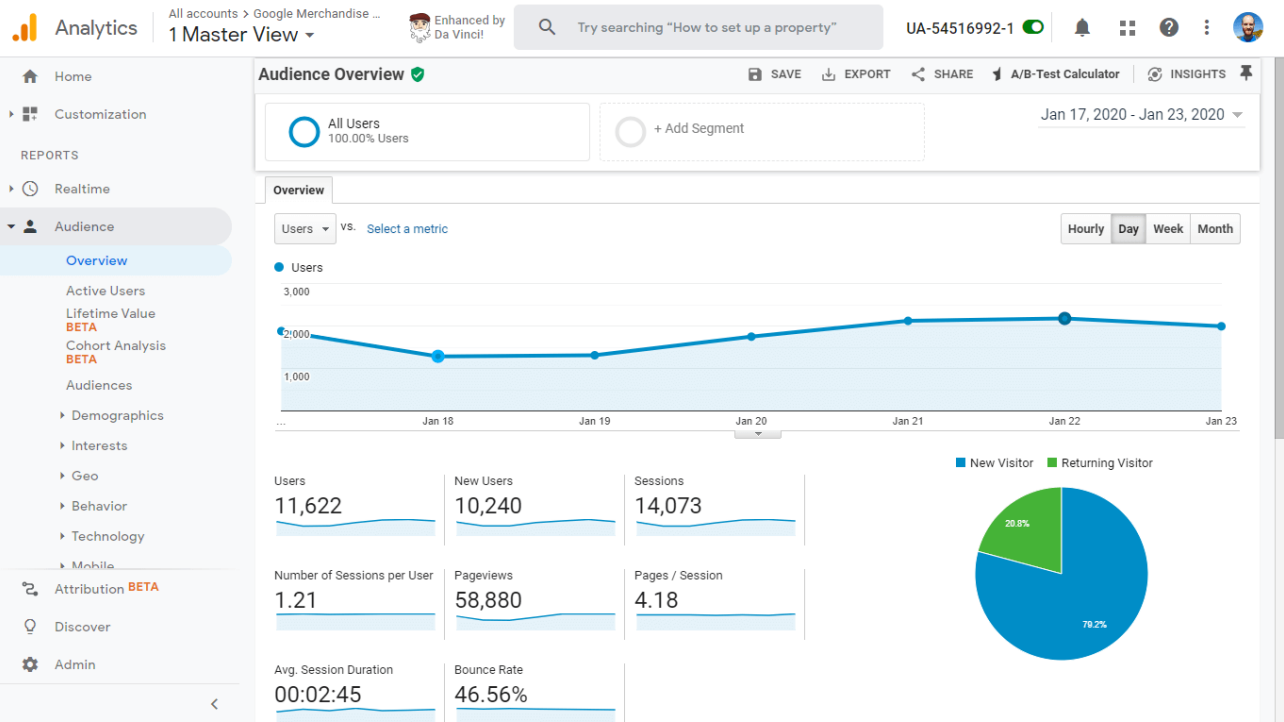
2. Build your audience

First ask yourself, who are you selling to this holiday season? You don't want to throw your money into the thin air so you need to know your audience well before you even plan your budget.
Tools like Google Analytics, Facebook analytics help you to have a good look into your audience interest and behavior so you can deliver the right message to the right people which will help to increase your conversion rate significantly.
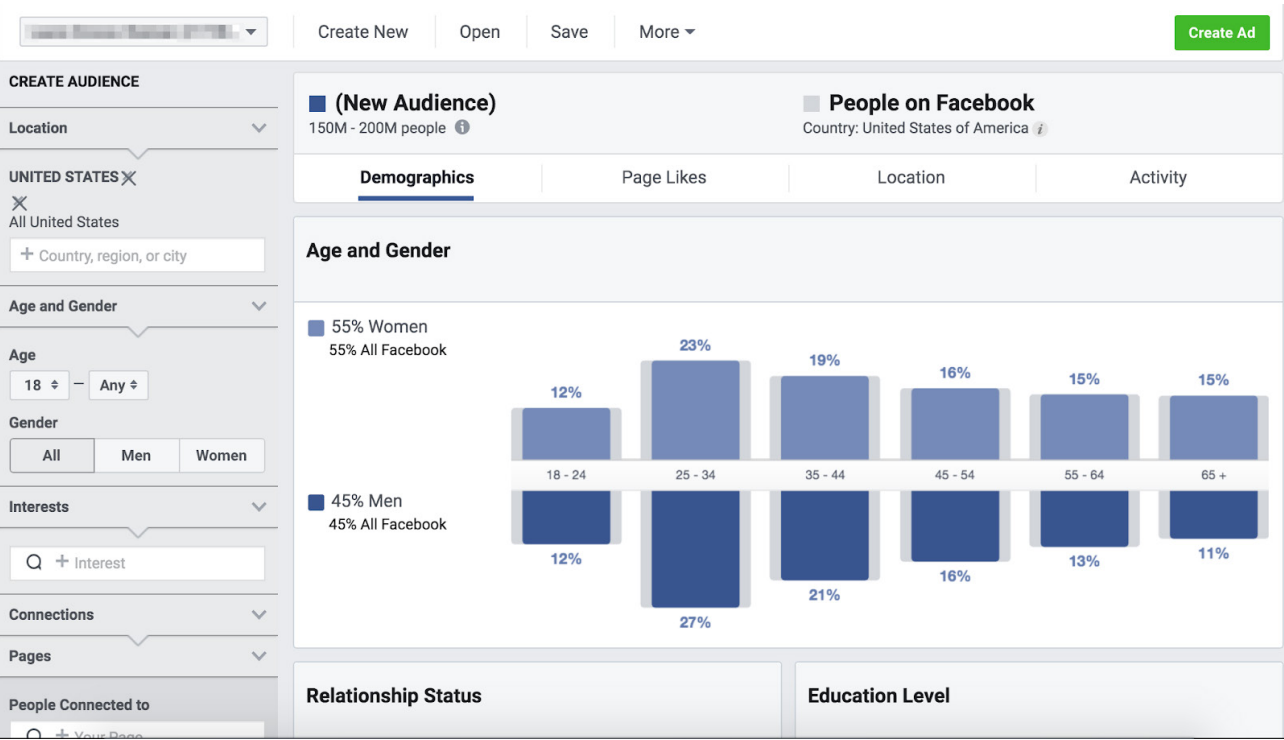
Source: Rentracks

3. Plan your budget

First you have to look at your company's financial health to make sure that it won't go bankrupt after the holiday season. Then defining your goals from revenue to R.O.A.S. R.O.A.S is a key metric to determine the success of your ads campaign and is crucial in making decisions whether you can scale up your ads spend.

4.Select right channels

Some channels perform better for others but might not work for you. So be sure to invest money on channels that suit your audience.
Amazon ads is the most high-intent channel but it will work best if you have an Amazon store. Other than that, Google ads and Facebook ads are the most popular channels due to their huge potential audience reach, insights and detailed reporting system.

3.2.1.2 Google Ads

49% of surveyed shoppers said they use Google to find the items they want. Google is not just a search engine. It also has other properties that help you reach over a billion users including You-tube, Gmail and Maps. In short, it provides you many options to reach your audience and in many different advertising forms.

It's not surprising that Google ads is the most effective channel for most advertisers in terms of effectiveness. It takes a lot of effort to succeed with your holiday Google ads campaign. Here we will give you a few tips that will help you beat the competition and achieve your goals.

Tip #1: Perform a keyword research

Keyword research is by far the most important process of your Google ads campaign. It helps you to have the basic ideas of the product's popularity, bidding and what R.O.A.S you can expect with your budget. Here are a few things you can consider doing:
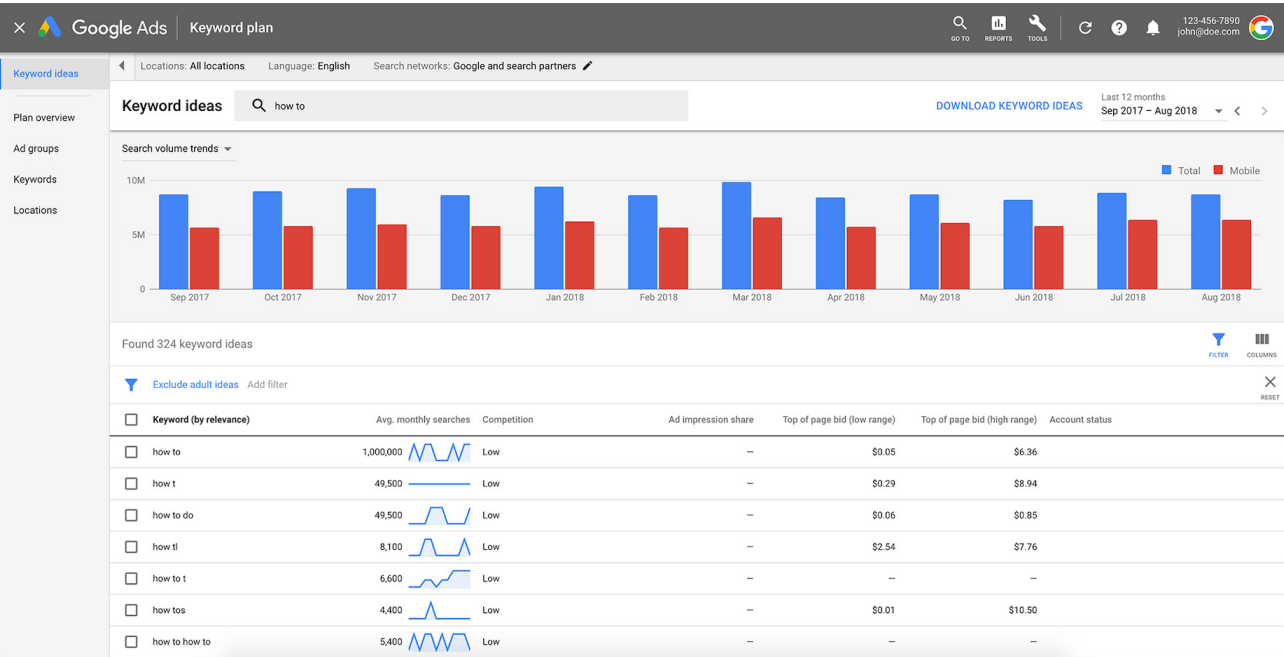
- Use Google Trends and our keyword research tool to identify those seasonal keywords relevant to your business and products.
- Hunt missing keywords by running a keyword report for the same period last year to define the keywords that produced the best results.
- Broaden your match types as the more people you reach, the more chance you can win the competition.

Source: webmienphi

Tip #2: Device performance

People browse the web on multiple devices across different channels. Cross-device users make 1.4 times more purchases than other customers via mobile apps, websites, and social networks. Mastering the buying cycle is key to online sales. In both B2B and B2C activities, cross-device data represents a critical lever of marketing growth, fed by information collected and shared in real time. You know which product offers work best and which paths lead to conversion most often. Remember that additional traffic will not necessarily produce additional conversions. With a cross-device analytics solution, you'll know if your Instagram ads were truly relevant and aligned with your marketing and commercial objectives.

Another important use case: measuring and analysing the number and percentage of carts that start out on mobile devices, but conclude with a check-out on desktop. Analysing these metrics helps ensure the fluidity of the customer journey across different platforms.

Tip #3: Focus on your Ad copy

People often play down the importance of ad copy and it has proven to be wrong. Especially, when it comes to holidays, people often get more emotional, having some spare time and in a ready-to-buy mood... They will be attracted by a creative ad copy. Your ad copy should not be too direct or too salesy. Try to be more creative with your ad copy, try to make browsers feel connected and inclusive.
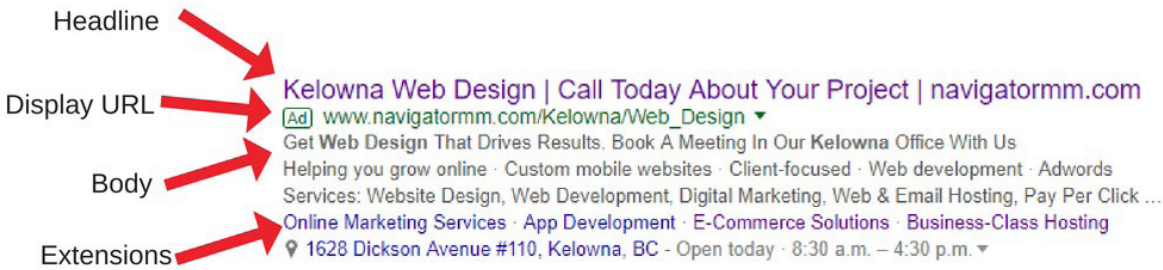
Source: navigator.ca

Tip #4: Automate your ads

Ads are no longer "set it forget it". To achieve your goal you need to constantly optimize your campaigns. However Google does provide you with automation tools that can help you handle the task.

When it comes to sales season, automation plays an even bigger role as you won't have time to just focus on optimizing your ads. So try to leverage the automation tools as much as possible, for example when you have to set a specific start and end time for a campaign or an ad set.

3.2.1.3 Facebook Ads

Same with Google ads, when it comes to sales season you should expect tougher competition, increase in ad costs and of course more people to shop. In this section, we will cover a few principles for running a successful Facebook ad campaign.

Tip #1: Invest in your video ad creative

Video is by far the most engaging content format, it's a great way to create a warm audience. Videos should be created in a perfect length that is enough for people to understand your products, services or offers in the first 10 seconds.

Source: newsfeed.org

Tip #2: Increase your remarketing audience

For many advertisers, website visitors genuinely are a better audience than video views. And many advertisers can't invest in effective video content. In that case, you'll want to start building a large website visitor remarketing audience before the holidays.

The best way to build a remarketing audience is by serving interesting and engaging content to potential customers. First you'll need to choose your audience. Choosing the right objective is important. We've had better luck selecting Website Conversions, even when the objective is link clicks.

Start by targeting lookalike audiences. Build them to look like website visitors, conversions, pixel events, or purchases - you'll need to have set up your Facebook pixel already.

Make sure to exclude all your retargeting audiences. That means video views, canvas and lead form engagements, and anyone who's clicked an ad. Selecting optimization types will impact costs. For larger audiences, we've gotten better results by selecting website link clicks. For smaller ones, we usually choose unique daily reach or impressions.

Tip #3: Train your pixel to find the right audience

The Facebook Pixel is every digital marketer's greatest weapon. In most cases, Facebook will know who to reach better than you. Facebook pixel collects a wide range of data from account history to website metrics and pixel traffic.

Facebook Pixel tracks the data every time an event is triggered. By time, Facebook learns more about your audience and who would be best to serve your ads. You can also train your pixel to find your next target audience by optimizing for specific conversion events. The pixel will then start to learn who completes the events and serve ads to similar audiences.

Tip #4: Build your email list

Building email lists has never been old. Having a sized email list would likely provide you an opportunity to have a strong launch in any activities you do including promotions. One of the best ways to grow your email list is to give away free content. Think about what your audience would find interesting aligning with your product or service before creating the content.

Tip #5: Create and test Dynamic Product Ads

Dynamic Product Ads are an often under-utilized format in Facebook marketing. Facebook generates ads dynamically based on actions people take on your website. We would recommend testing Dynamic Product Ads before your main holiday sales to see what works. If your website has enough traffic, you can test out the following ad set campaigns:

View products, but no purchase

Clicked on email product, but no purchase

Added to cart, but no purchase

Cross-sell to past customers who match certain interests

Up-sell to recent buyers who visited your website again

Sales and promotions

Source: invideo.io

Tip #6: Increase daily budgets

Facebook serves your ads based on auction data. Of course there are several factors that determine your ads appearance and budget is an important one.

A large enough budget will give you a competitive advantage over your competitors by having your ads display more times to the audience thus increasing the chances of driving traffic. Your budget doesn't or affect very little to your bid.

3.2.1.4 Retargeting Ads

Same with Google ads, when it comes to sales season you should expect tougher competition, increase in ad costs and of course more people to shop. In this section, we will cover a few principles for running a successful Facebook ad campaign.

Source: newsfeed.org

#1: Action based remarketing

Every user is unique so having the same strategy for all users wouldn't be effective. Some users would love knowledgeable content while others may be in need of finding the right products for them or seeking a good discount.

The best way to retarget your visitors is to display ads based on their previous actions on your website. If someone spent time on a product page then retarget them with ads related to that product. If another user left a product on his cart then try to remind him of the product with a sense of urgency so he can come back and complete the purchase.

#2: Deliver ads at the right moment

The moment to deliver your ads is important especially when it comes to retargeting. You need to make sure your target audience sees your ads at the time that they will most likely make the purchase. Hence, you need to schedule your ads in a way so that nobody misses it. But before creating an ad schedule, you must know what's the perfect time to retarget your audience.

So first identify when you should retarget users with ads. Because if you show them ads the next second they exit your website, it will start bothering them. Give them 1-2 hours of time or even more and then show them remarketing ads. Another thing you can do is to create a common schedule according to your website's visit frequency. You can use google analytics to check what days and hours of the week get the most engagement. Once you identify the best slot, you can schedule your remarketing ads for this time.

#3: Prepare Ads prior to Holiday Season

A good preparation means a better chance to win during the holiday season. So start preparing your ads well before the holiday season begins. With a well prepared strategy, you won't jump into a situation that burns yourself out at the last minute. Ideally, you should have all the required assets ready 2 weeks before starting the promotion campaign.

#4: Target users who abandon their carts

Abandoned carts are the biggest challenge for every online business. According to Statista, the abandoned cart rate on average is almost 70%. It means you may be missing out on 70% additional revenue.

Remarketing is the best way to convert those abandoned carts to purchases. Target them via emails, ads or wherever you could find them as it's much easier to convert these people then to find a whole new audience. Try to understand as much as possible about the reason they left the products behind in their carts to deliver the right message or offer that they won't be able to miss.

3.2.1 Scale your ads budget effectively
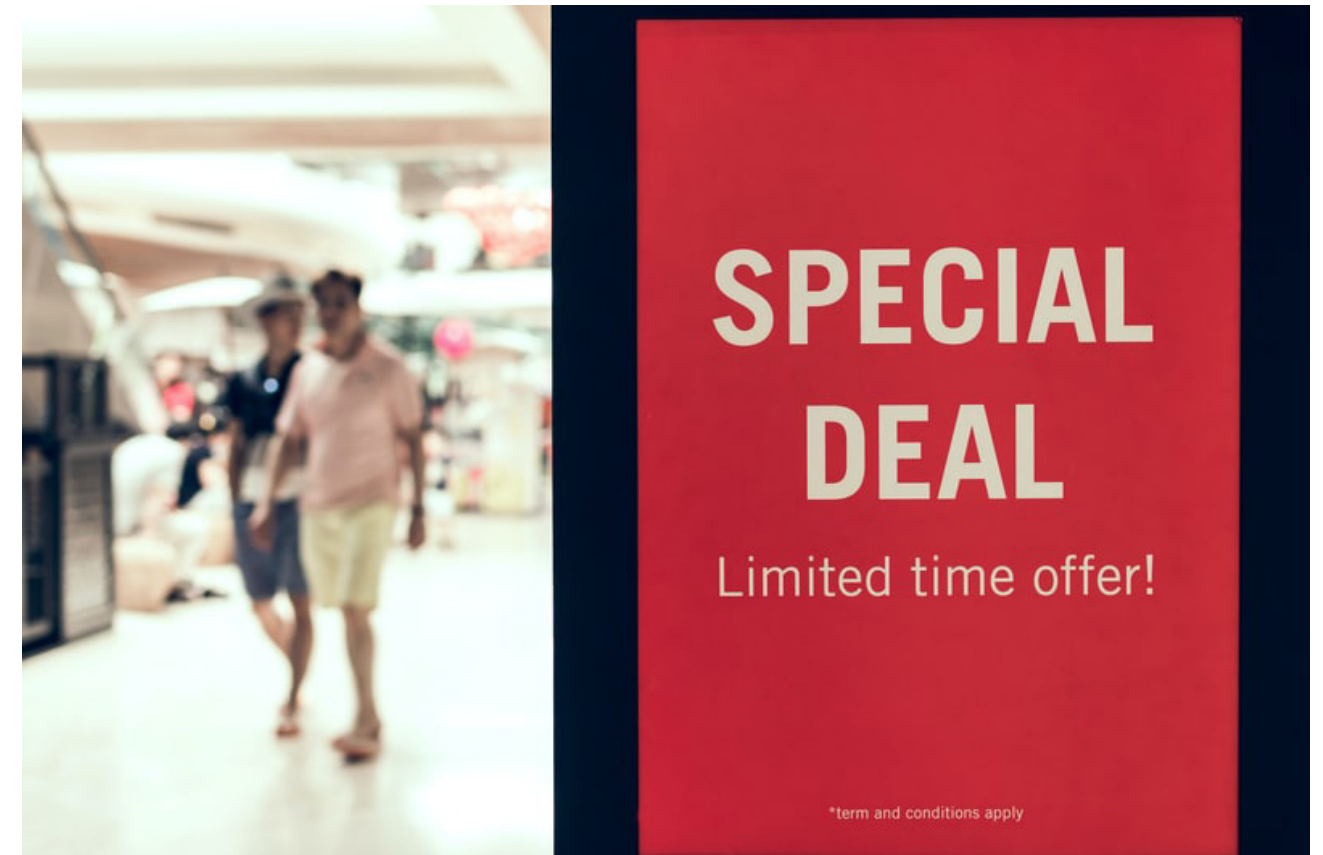
Source: Unsplash

Offers play an integral part in the success of a whole promotion campaign. The holiday season is a once-a-year occasion that every online business will try to give out the best possible offers to boost revenues. So besides anything else, you must spend time trying to figure out a unique offer that your customers can afford to miss.

You should start thinking about the offers as early as mid September so you will have enough time to execute your ideas. Now we will jump right into the most popular and effective offers that you could consider this holiday season.

3.2.2.1 Discounts

This is by far the best and will always be the best. However, to stand out of the crowd you need to be a little smarter than your competitors. For example, offer a 20% discount for orders from $100 instead of $20 off as shoppers might look at a $20 discount as "not too attractive". Avoid higher your price and then offer a greater discount, your users will know about that and you will lose them forever.

3.2.2.2 Bundled Products

Bundling related and appealing items together and offering better discounts than a single item is also a great way to move your inventory faster during the holiday season. This works best with electronic items and apparel. For example, bundling cell phones with accessories will give shoppers a sense of having more for less.

You need to pay attention to the bundling products aligning with your inventory to make sure you provide great offers as well as move products that you have to move at the same time.

3.2.2.3 Gift Cards

Gift cards are a popular yet effective strategy for any online business. Think about Christmas, people will like to gift their loved ones with gift cards so they can go ahead and buy what they really want. Be sure to give people the ability to print or share their gift cards via emails, social media to create a bit of a viral effect.

3.2.2.4 Limited Time Offers

Limited-time offers work like a charm on online shoppers because they give prospects a compelling reason to make a purchase by driving urgency. An offer becomes more attractive for consumers when it's bound by time or availability because we're afraid to miss out on a good opportunity.

Thinking about Black Friday doorbusters, people know they only get that super attractive discounted item if they act fast enough. This is also a great way to attract people to your site even if they miss out on the doorbusters they will be likely to check out other discounted items.

3.2.2.5 Buy X get Y Free

People love free stuff, there is no doubt about that. Offering a free item when purchasing another item is a great way to sell your higher priced items. Without saying, the Buy One, Get One Free strategy is a great discount technique to use to appeal to consumers.

3.2.3 Run an email marketing campaign

Source: Unsplash

The holiday season remains one of the most precious and profitable times of the year for both online and offline businesses. It's the time when you can use email marketing power to drive huge sales for your store. Emails support you in connecting personally with your fans and driving new customers with exclusive promotion and reward programs.

3.2.3.1 Why should you run email marketing for the holiday season?

1. Reach active customers

It's essential to communicate with your customers when they are listening. Dig deeper into your customer insights to find out when they are most active and what emails get the highest open and click-through rates. What do they have in common? Start your conversations with consumers by meeting them where they are with interesting holiday messaging.

2. Offering instant buying options

A study indicates that 41% of retailers will apply "Buy Now" buttons in their email marketing, making it easier for subscribers to make purchase decisions. By adding a call-to-action button to your email, you can emphasize a gift, a unique offer, or an event that a subscriber can purchase in a few clicks. Bear in mind that your consumers are busy as you are during the holiday seasons. Anything that can fasten their holiday shopping will be great for them and your business.

3. Support all holiday campaigns

Emails must belong to your marketing plan. Only emails can not have the power to convert your customers quickly. Whether you would like to rocket sales, drive email subscribers to holiday events, display lovely gift ideas or gift guides, you can capitalize on your email newsletter to further engage your customers.

3.2.3.2 Top Holiday Email Marketing Tips & Tricks

Source: Internet

1. Segment your list

Segmenting your list is crucial to ensure that the content appeals to the subscribers, especially during the holidays when emotions run high.

If you're tracking information like what your subscribers browse on your site and what they've bought from you, segmenting does not seem like a Herculean task. The better you understand your recipients' preferences, the more properly you can segment them and send targeted emails during the holidays, which will eventually result in better, more quality conversions.

Here are several efficient methods to segment your holiday email marketing:

- Interests: Divide subscribers into groups according to previous purchase categories or sections browsed on your site.
- Year-round vs seasonal customers: Seasonal customers have a different relationship with your brand compared to year-round buyers. Consider their requirements and motivations so that you can modify the frequency, content, and timing of your future follow-up campaign.
- Coupon lovers: Find out customers who often (or only) buy with coupon codes to help efficiently engage your most price-sensitive customers. In the same way, segmenting can help prevent providing discounts to subscribers who willingly purchase at full price.
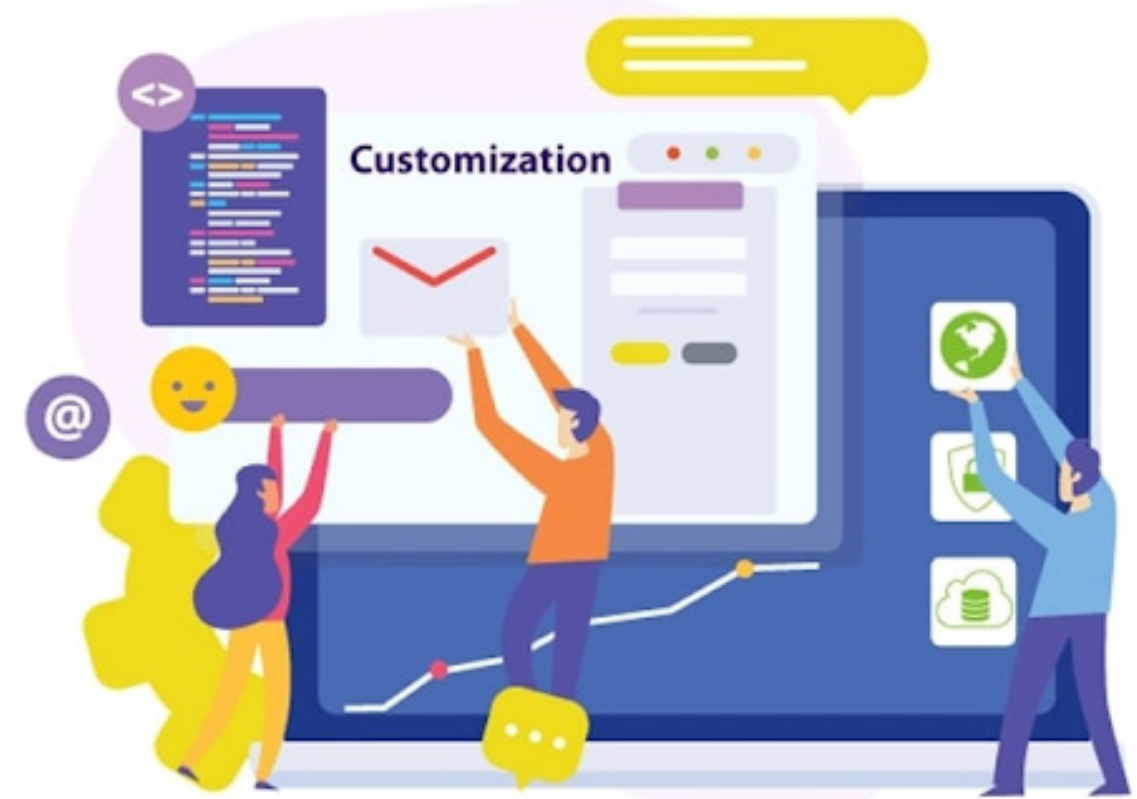

Source: Internet

2. Leverage marketing automation

Accessing the right people with the right message at the proper time is the ideal way to boost email open rates and customer engagement. And email marketing automation is your secret weapon to do this. You can consider using these automation strategies to avail of your holiday emails.

- Build abandoned cart automation workflows: In the competitive holiday season, abandoned cart emails are more significant for securing sales.
- Target warm prospects using lead scoring: Utilizing engagement details for customers and scoring contacts can create customer profiles to inform segmentation.
- Send a seasonal welcome email: In the holiday time, you'll probably obtain new subscribers signing up. You can generate an adapted welcome email with an exclusive discount or holiday theme to get more subscribers

Source: Internet

3. Get personal

Personalization plays an integral part in the success of your holiday email marketing campaign.

Dynamic content generated on the basis of subscribers' needs and demands is bound to build a firm impression of your brand in the minds of the recipients and also drive a higher ROI for you. Customize your offers and deals based on the behavioral data you have at hand, or if you don't have any, ask them what they want or what they expect to see in your holiday emails.

Update the content of your triggered emails. What if someone is signing up to get your emails around the holiday season? You won't want to send them your regular welcome template, will you? Don't let your new subscribers miss the holiday deals and holiday-specific promotions.

4. Combine interactivity and fallback

Visual, interactive elements like cinemagraphs, GIFs, and gamification will include interest and elegance in your holiday messages.

Interactivity in emails is an engagement tactic that catches attention and triggers excitement during the holiday time. You can also refresh content with a drop-down menu, slider, accordion, flip effect, and gamification in your emails. Nevertheless, with limited email client capability, it is essential that you offer fallback support. And you'd better test more before sending out the emails.

5. Optimize for mobile

Source: Internet

It's important to ensure that your holiday email marketing campaigns, or your marketing campaigns in general, need to be mobile-responsive. Ultimately, one of the most effective ways to test your holiday email marketing strategies is to check how it appears on the mobile devices your shoppers are using.

 If you want to optimize your holiday email marketing for mobile devices, you might:

- Use responsive templates which are suitable for various screens while keeping the most necessary content visible.
- Optimize images so that they look stunning and load fast as slow-loading content will drive mobile users away.
- Write brief subject lines, or ensure the primary information is at the start, so recipients won't be confused by missing information.

6. Create a sense of urgency

In economics, we know that if the supply of a product declines, its demand rockets. It is substantial that you generate a sense of urgency in your holiday email marketing campaigns.

For example, add a timer or scarcity on your products so that your shoppers grasp that the promotion will expire very soon. It boosts conversion rates dramatically.

Bear in mind that when any shoppers click on your promotion, you should continue with the timer or urgency theme. For example, you can consider setting your Cyber Monday email or page times to expire at 12:00 am to optimize your Cyber Monday email conversions.

When you show your products are rare, you should identify what quantity is left. If you have 10 items in stock, display 2 items only.

3.2.4 Speed up your SEO efforts

3.2.4.1 Choose an appropriate starting time

Deciding when to start a marketing campaign is an important task for any shop owners. Once you can understand or estimate the current trend, then you can deliver a suitable strategy to take the lead in the marketplace. It is highly suggested for marketers to launch their marketing plan early to draw as much attention from potential customers as possible.

For example, Valentine's Day is on 14 Feb, so you would not start marketing your stores and products right on that day. If you do so, you are sure to just miss a fortune. The point here is trying to launch your promotional program as soon as possible to attract more people or at least gain brand awareness from the community. Because Valentine's Day is a special occasion for people to show their feelings towards their beloved, they have a tendency to prepare carefully to cheer their partners. In other words, shopping doers are likely to search for the most favorable present early before Valentine's Day.

3.2.4.2 Use suitable keywords

Source: Internet

Selecting keywords is among the most detrimental factors contributing to high position in search engine result pages (SERPs) of a website. Therefore, if you can figure out the most popular keywords will be searched by web browsers, your landing page is sure to rank higher in SERPs. When looking for effective keywords, there are some aspects that you should take into your consideration such as who are your target customers.

For example, if your target customers are men, then your key phrase can be "gift ideas for girls". Besides, shop admins can make use of some tools that are helpful in finding keywords and phrases such as Google AdWords. Based on suggestions provided, you can choose the most suitable ones to focus on.

Source: Internet

3.2.4.3 Spend space for testimonials

Before making a decision whether they should buy a product or not, customers often look for reviews or feedback from other people who already used or purchased this product. Hence, including positive comments and reviews in your product pages will increase the number of visitors to your website, consequently raise conversion rate and make your products become widely known.

3.2.4.4 Use visual aids to describe products

The use of visual aids in products' description is the most favorable trend by store owners. By offering images and videos about products, customers are enabled to take a glance at more angles of the items. As a result, the products introduced become more reliable and trustworthy among consumers that forces them to decide to buy these items more quickly. Moreover, remember to name your pictures and videos with related keywords or phrases. These descriptions also significantly help your stores to be easily found in SERPs and even gain the highest position.

3.2.4.5 Create friendly URLs for your landing page

Although there are hundreds of criteria evaluated by Google spiders before ranking a website in SERPs, having friendly URLs is a determining factor that marks a landing page as reliable, informative and relevant to what web browsers are looking for.

However, there are various online merchants which do not show any concern about this problem. As a result, their URLs contain numerous awkward symbols such as "?sort=2,5page" that are difficult for spiders to understand and acknowledge the main topic of this link. Therefore, try to configure friendly URLs so that both spiders and visitors can easily know what you are selling or what the core content of the page is.

3.2.5 Don't miss out on the benefits of SMS

Holidays are always a busy time of the year for e-commerce businesses and also consumers' inboxes. They are often bombarded with marketing emails and advertisements from multiple companies, leaving the SMS marketing channel to be the least distracted channel with least noise.

For your brand to fire on all marketing channels when it comes to holidays, a simple and clean email combined with timely, personalized SMS messages is a holiday must-have. This way, you can make sure the customers are not missing any of your sales as well as getting updated on the cart's status, especially when the shipping companies are also overloaded during the holiday seasons.

3.2.5.1 Awesome benefits of SMS

1. Higher Open Rate Than Emails
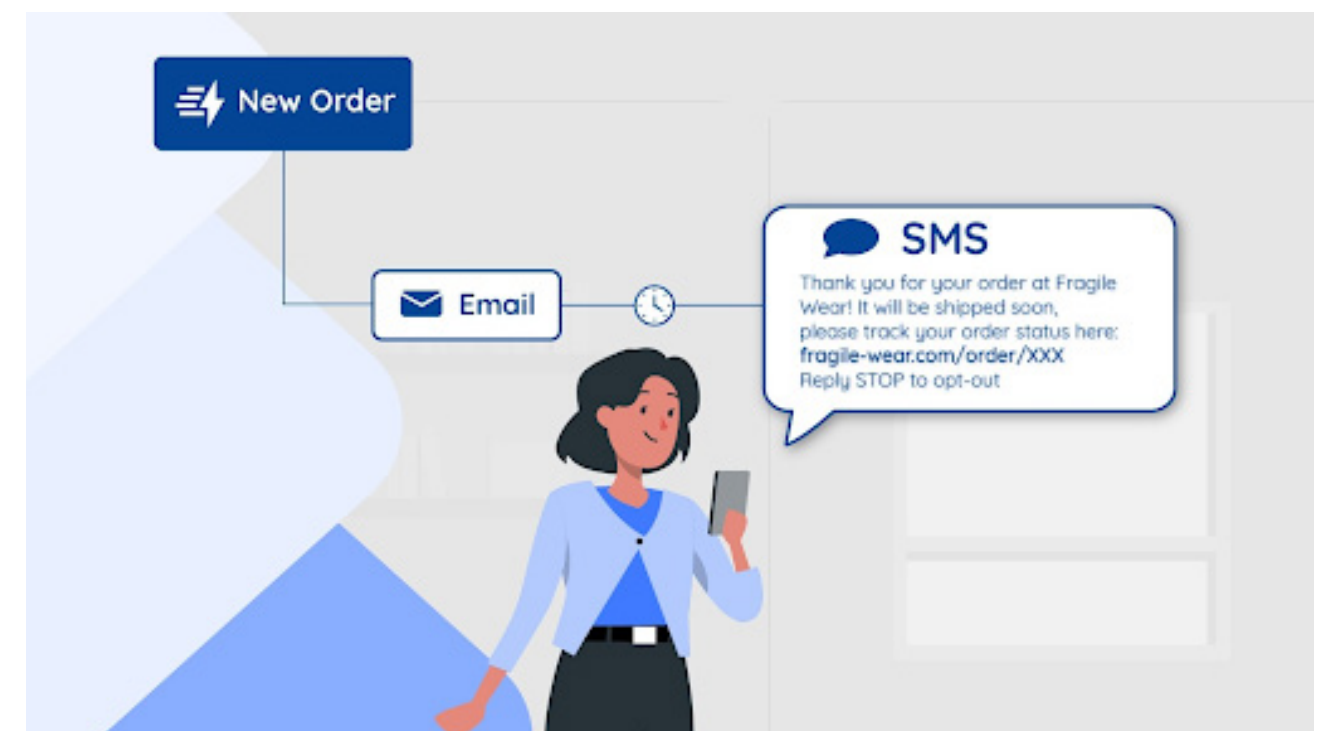
Source: AVADA design

One of the greatest benefits of SMS Newsletters is that they are opened up to 98% of the time the customers get them. This gives SMS an open rate higher than any other advertisement messages.

It's easy for emails to get sent to the spam folder, and it's easy for a customer to throw away the flier they're given at the mall. But with the increasing use of cell phones and the popularity of messaging, text marketing is less likely to get ignored. More often than not, the customers can open the text and read its contents. If you want to find a way to interact with your audience more consistently, try SMS Newsletters.

2. Cost Effective

It doesn't cost a lot to give a text to a customer at all. And when it comes to sending a lot of

people, the cost is not a concern. It's usually much more economical when you equate it to other marketing choices, such as the purchasing of a Facebook ad spot. This makes SMS marketing a perfect choice for all companies. Particularly for companies that are just starting out and looking for a way to advertise without spending too much money right off the bat.

3. Mobile-Friendly

It is extremely important these days to be able to present your company as mobile-friendly. More and more people use their mobile devices to do shopping and browsing. You don't want to miss out on this kind of publicity. SMS marketing is a huge part of making your company mobile-friendly and can be a powerful benefit to your mobile marketing strategy.

4. Reach a Wide Demographic

As so many people own cell phones and other mobile devices these days, the demographic advantages of SMS newsletter is clear. Instead of relying on only one marketing campaign that might only be able to reach one segment of your audience, SMS marketing can reach everyone. As long as your customers have a mobile device that receives text (which is basically any cell phone), they will be able to receive and read the messages you send them.
Fast Delivery

5. Fast Delivery
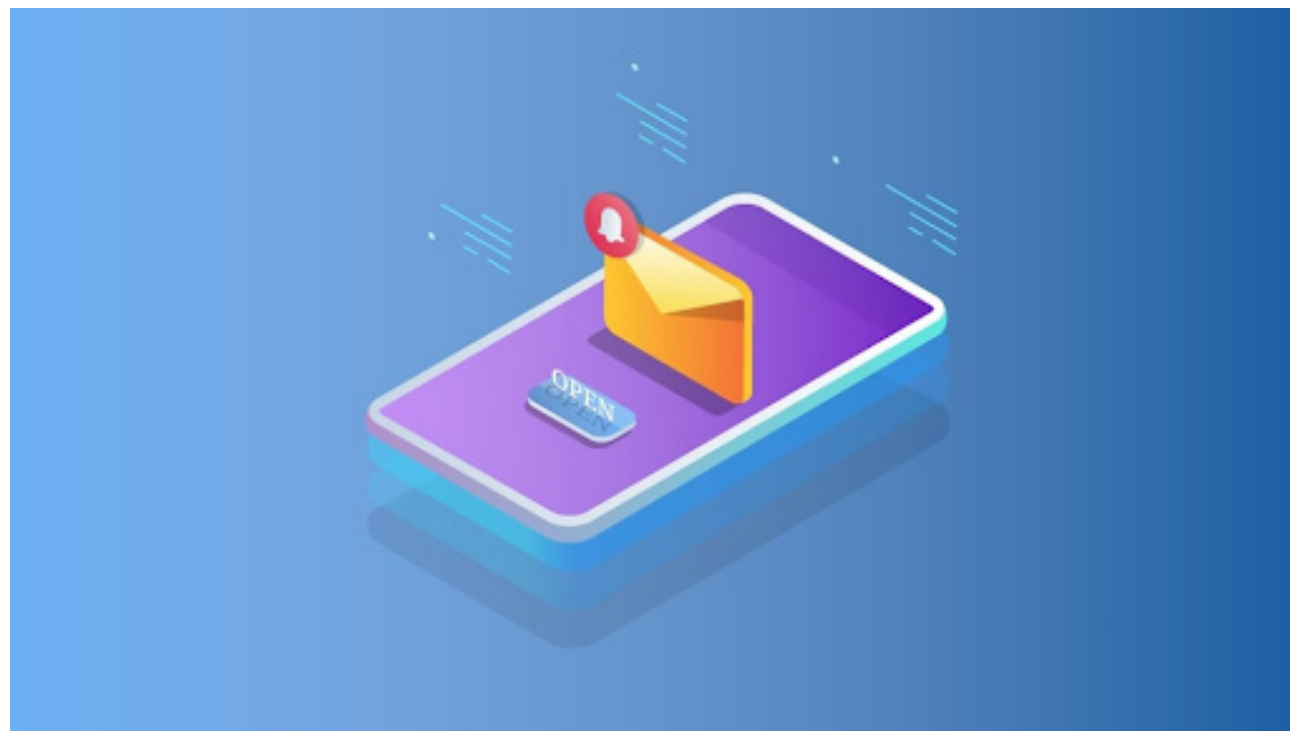
Source: Internet

There's practically no time to wait when it comes to SMS sending. When you push the send button, you can be sure that your customers will receive your message immediately. This is a great advantage, because this kind of advertisement needs little planning time. There

is no information to collect or print to wait. There are no plans to complete or people to contact in advance.

The only thing you need to do is craft your message and send it to your customers. And, since we all know that messages are much more likely to be opened than emails, you can be confident that your customers can see your important news as soon as possible.

6. Flexible and Customizable

When it comes to the advantages of SMS newsletters, one of the best is that it is so flexible. You can craft text messages that suit various purposes to help promote your brand. You can announce a deal, offer a temporary discount, reward loyal customers, promote a new product, share an update, and more with SMS newsletters. It's a great tool for any company, big or small. This brings me to the second part of this article, which is how you should use SMS newsletters to build a good brand image. Let's get right into it.

3.2.5.2 5 Best practices for SMS automation

You now have a few ideas of how to use SMS marketing for sending updates and information to your customers. You now even have a fantastic tool in hand to start using SMS automation. The natural next step is to learn about SMS automation best practices to get it right with your text campaigns and make sure your messages are relevant.

Here are the best practices for SMS automation that you need to know.

1. Get the recipients' permission
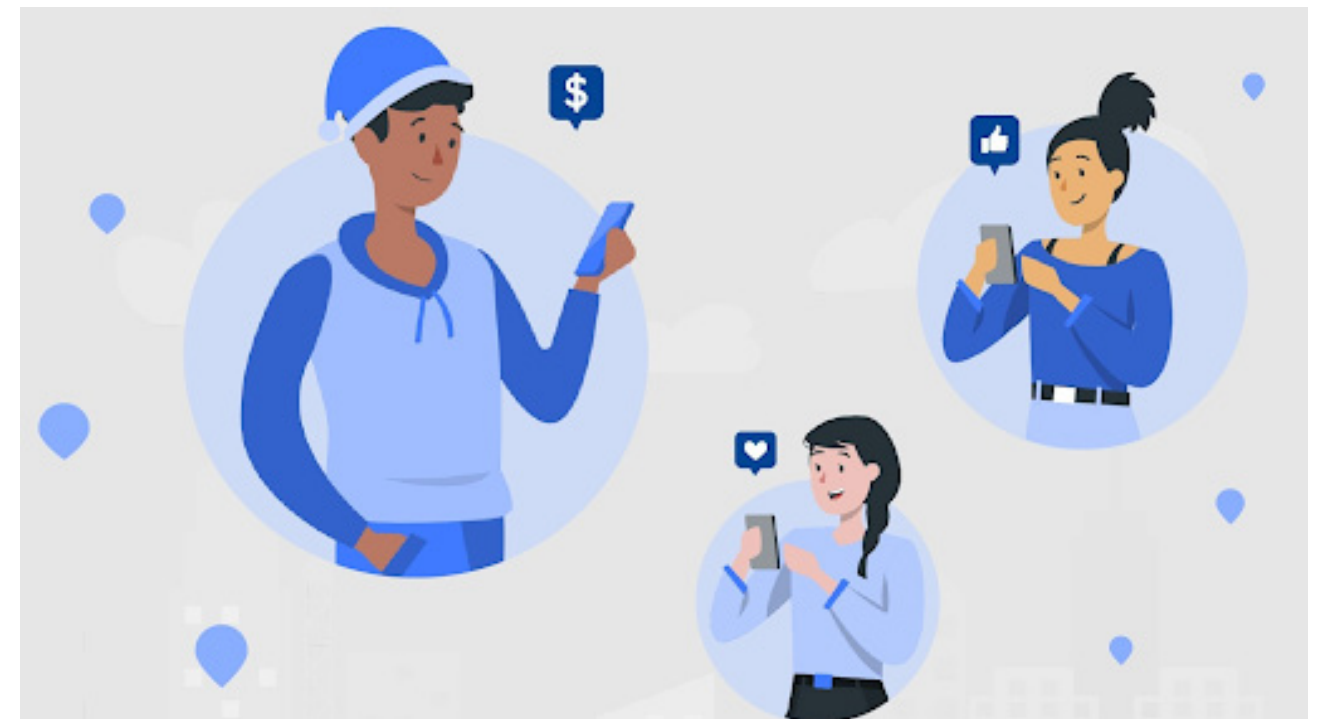
Source: AVADA design

Never send a marketing message without the recipient's permission. If you send a text message without explicit consent, you may be violating the TCPA law and can be fined severely. Aside from that reason, the recipients will not like receiving messages from a storage company and are likely to opt out ASAP.

The real challenge is keeping the permission you've earned from subscribers. Do that by starting off with full disclosure: tell your recipients exactly what kind of text messages you are going to send to them.

On that note, you should include a way for recipients to opt out with every SMS message. Just like email, you should make sure your SMSs have an unsubscribe link, or they can text STOP to opt out. Sending SMS messages to consumers who don't want them means nothing for you or your company.

2. Use an omnichannel approach

Omnichannel communication is a fantastic way to improve the conversion rate and customer retention. Your SMS automation efforts combined with other channels can deliver an even better result. If you can successfully incorporate your SMS automation campaign with email marketing, web push notifications, Messenger, and other marketing channels, you are much likely to achieve marketing goals way faster.

3. Don't spam your subscribers

It's advised that you don't send more than four promotional SMS messages in a month. However, depending on specific situations you can exceed this limit. But whatever you try to do, keep the number of promotional SMS messages to a minimum so you don't end up annoying or peppering your customers with too many messages.

4. Personalize whenever you can

Your recipients will have a much more pleasant user experience if you are able to personalize your SMS campaign messages, like addressing the audience by their first name or sending offers that are tailored to their previous shopping behaviors.

Text offers can also be more relevant by being based on location, or previous purchases. This approach helps build and maintain a personal relationship with your customers through text messaging.

Personalization also means thinking about the time your customers receive their SMS messages. Remember that many people enable their text message notifications on their phones. Which means that if your text message arrives at 4 am, it's going to result in a very unhappy customer.

5. Keep SMS messages short

You have just 160 characters for each SMS message to work with. So every word in your text must serve a purpose to truly convince the customers to take action. Also, don't forget to have a clear CTA text or link at the end of the message.

3.2.6 Boost Affiliate Marketing sales

It's the holiday season, many merchants are finding ways to boost sales as much as possible. They have heard the term "affiliate marketing" but they might be unsure where to start. Are you a newcomer to affiliate marketing? No worries, this section will give you a comprehensive overview of affiliate marketing and how to leverage it effectively throughout the holiday season. Let's get started!

3.2.6.1 What is Affiliate Marketing?

Source: AVADA

In Entrepreneurs Encyclopedia, Affiliate Marketing is defined as "A way for a company to sell its products by signing up individuals or companies ("affiliates") who market the company's products for a commission."

In other words, affiliate marketing is a marketing strategy in which a company compensates affiliates for each successful purchase made by a consumer acquired through the affiliate's marketing efforts. Affiliates are paid for bringing in as many consumers as possible to earn commissions, while businesses gain higher revenue.

3.2.6.2 How to recruit potential affiliates

Increasing the reach of your affiliate program is one of the most effective ways to help you recruit as many affiliates as possible, and this requires you to advertise your program.

You can effectively promote the program on social media and display a popup banner presenting the affiliate program anytime a new registration occurs. Advertising using your accessible affiliate channel from the current affiliates is also an option.

The more people know about it, the more people will join your affiliate network.

After that, you can categorize potential affiliates into several groups (micro-influencers, review/ media sites, bloggers, etc.). Choose the affiliates who are relevant to your niche and the most profitable from your point of view.

Having trouble finding your affiliates? Here is where you will find a solution.

1. Visualize your affiliate program on your website
This is where affiliates prefer to check there first. When it comes to attracting affiliates, it goes without saying that you should strive to provide a commission structure and payout choices that are transparent and easy to comprehend.

2. Existing customers
People purchasing from you can be your best affiliates, so don't overlook your customers. Definitely send your consumers an email series motivating them to earn money by referring your items to their friends and family. Referral marketing is a fantastic technique to bring in new customers.

3. Affiliate network
Listing your items on affiliate networks like Shareasale, Clickbank, or JvZoo is another fantastic approach to discover affiliates. Affiliate marketers seeking a product to promote frequently go there to do so. Make sure you have a good program with a good affiliate commission. Include tools to help with promotions such as articles, images, banners, and other materials.

Source: Travelpayouts

4. Affiliate solution
Today, affiliate dedicated solutions bringing together multiple media partners (affiliates) and advertisers, such as UpPromote Marketplace, can help you speed up the affiliate recruiting

process. The platform provides you with a list of trustworthy media partners.

Influencers/bloggers outreach

Look for bloggers, or influencers doing the same niche as you. Those in similar fields are likely to have a number of audiences, so establishing a network of influencers in your industry might be useful.
Working with influencers requires more effort than other methods but the bring-back results will drive your revenue insane. Look for further influencers' outreach tactics to leverage this method effectively.
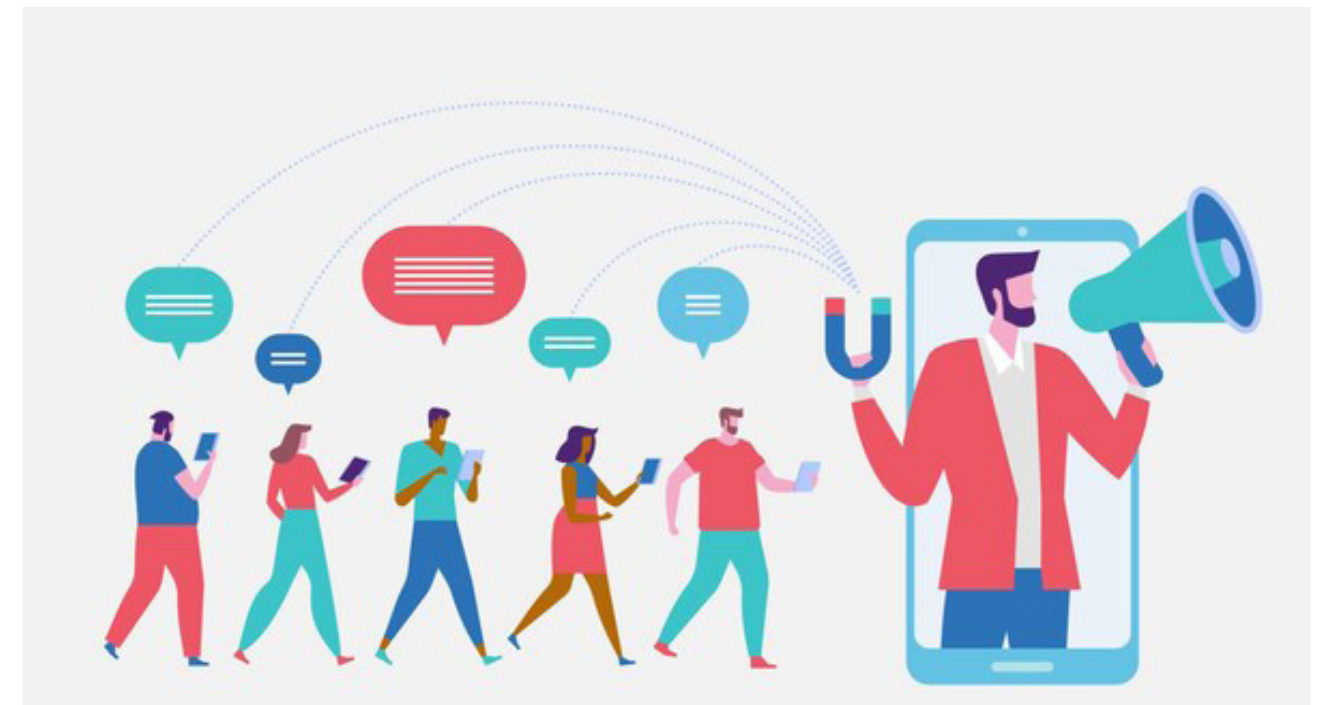
Source: Talkinginfluencer

5. Social media marketing
Social media sites are a wonderful method to find affiliates and keep in touch with them over time.
With Instagram, using hashtags is one method to discover them. For example, you can search for #makeup and then go through the results to locate people who provide beauty tutorials or sample makeup.
On Facebook, you can join communities where your target affiliates are active. When you've found the people you want to attract, contact them with the goal of developing a connection before telling them about your affiliate program.

3.2.6.3 Why leverage affiliate marketing for a successful holiday sales season?
The post-pandemic world does not mean people purchasing intention dropdown but surge, e-commerce sales experienced an incredible gain of 47.2% during the holiday season. So missing the chance to sell effectively means accepting the fact to lose a massive revenue for

your business this holiday season since holiday sales success is frequently a key component in reaching and exceeding sales targets.

Understanding that many e-commerce sellers are facing difficulties in holiday seasons like being unable to reach a larger audience, less traffic, or money-wasting on other marketing types, etc. Here comes affiliate marketing!

Leveraging this powerful yet inexpensive marketing type in the holiday sales season can reap many benefits for your business such as:

- Increase your sales: Consumers love holiday deals, particularly coupon promotions, which means they are more likely to convert and spend more than the minimum necessary amount, resulting in your sales rocket.
- Boost brand awareness: When a brand joins in an affiliate holiday, its logo is displayed in the promotional materials of the affiliate partner to a new audience.
- Acquire new customers: Your brand is reached by a myriad of new customers thanks to the broad audience network of your affiliates. Those customers have a higher chance of buying your product since it's suggested by their trusted one within the limited holiday time creating a feeling of urgency to purchase promptly.

3.2.6.4 Best practices for holiday affiliate marketing promotions

1. Plan everything

Heads up! It's never early to arrange an affiliate marketing plan for the holiday. You and your affiliates will be extremely busy during the holidays, and being organized is the best way to avoid missing a beat. Schedule your promos for the entire sale period at least a few weeks ahead of time, and make a checklist to keep track of your efforts.

Getting your affiliate program in tip-top shape for the holidays by including these in your plan:

- Determine affiliate program goals: Set out the goal to see whether the holiday programs meet or surpass a target, whether it's achieving a particular income level, converting visitors at a specific rate, or guaranteeing a certain proportion of orders.
- Set a budget: To avoid falling on the latter budget, work to forecast the budget your affiliate program will need to accomplish the goals you've set. Whatever your goal is, having a clear budget can help you stay organized when it comes to where and how you spend your money in the affiliate channel.
- The running time: Plan ahead of time how long each offer will run, when you'll send it, and if you'll employ time restrictions, how long you'll set them.
- Promotional strategy: the promotion type might dictate program optimization tactics used throughout the holiday. Don't neglect it!
- Review affiliate performance: Examine your stats from the previous Q4, and the program's success in Q3 this year to assist you to plan for this year's holiday season. So you can create a directed strategy based on this data to help steer your holiday plans in 2021.

Those are the main issues that should be included in your holiday promotion plan to boost sales with affiliate marketing. Next, let's move to ways to work with your partners effectively.

Source: Travelaffiliateclub

2. Work with affiliates efficiently

- **Engage affiliates as early as possible**

Once you've made up your mind on a promotional plan, it's time to engage your affiliates. You can **excite new affiliates** by having a compelling activation offer ready for newly onboarded affiliates so they can get started right away. The sooner you can bring on new partners, the greater success you will have.

With businesses already working with affiliates, you should **select the most reliable affiliates** having demonstrated their ability to generate more leads. Since an affiliate marketer's ability to stand out among the numerous competing holiday promotions will be more beneficial. This is the moment to decide which partners you want to collaborate with closely in Q4, to set up strategic meetings to explain your marketing schedule, and discuss unique ideas to help you achieve your objectives. That's why you need to plan ahead of time for the best pricing and selections of products.

Then **schedule communication time with your selected affiliates** and contact them through email to engage them in your holiday sales promotion as early as possible. It's critical not to leave affiliates with any concerns regarding your promotions when the holiday season heats up. All issues with offers, special discounts, or affiliate programs must be handled ASAP. You risk losing a significant chunk of revenue without strong communications.

- **Provide affiliates with holiday marketing materials**

The next approach to help your affiliates succeed is to offer them banners and social media graphics to use in their promotions. Having ready-to-use marketing materials that are tailored to the current season and campaign saves time and allows your affiliates to focus on promoting your product.

It also ensures that their campaigns are in line with your overall brand and promotions. Offering

both default corporate visuals as well as seasonal and holiday material is a fantastic idea. This keeps things compelling and draws attention to limited-time offers.

- **Offer bonus affiliate incentives during holiday seasons**

Affiliates are still consumers appreciating receiving a reward for their efforts. With that in mind, there are a few things you can do to boost affiliate engagement and excitement. Seasonal contests are an excellent way to motivate affiliates to go above and beyond. Top achievers can be rewarded with a bonus, the more they sell, the more commissions they get. For example, during December, you can offer a 20% commission boost if your affiliates reach sales of 1000$.

Or if a broad increase doesn't align with your revenue goals, you may limit it to the specific products the affiliates want to push the most. Selling one product means less revenue? Not really, this case study from Harsh Agrawal has successfully made $16,433 with one product while doing an affiliate partnership with Bluehost will inspire you. This motivates affiliates to work more during peak seasons and improves your program's performance.

3.2.6.5 Mistakes that merchants should avoid for a successful holiday sales season

To ensure your affiliate campaigns run smoothly and improve your promotion path in the holiday season, don't neglect these affiliate marketing mistakes.

1. Spend less on commissions

During holiday seasons, many businesses leverage affiliate programs to draw more profits. You will sink in the competitive market if you offer little or not enough incentive bonus commissions for your affiliate partners. The more commissions for affiliates you spend, the more revenue your business gains.

Feel free to expand your budget this holiday season, but remember to do it wisely and systematically. A good marketing approach is to create a list of high-commission items for high-value or highlighted products.

2. Not prepare marketing materials

It is uncommon for affiliates to develop their own graphic and then advertise your items. You should prepare referral links, affiliate widgets, holiday banner advertising, marketing images with the message your brand wants to promote during the holiday season beforehand.

All of these sounds bulky and complicated tasks, however, with the help of UpPromote - a powerful affiliate management tool, you can handle every marketing piece at your fingertips.

3. Have no communication with your affiliates

Conversation is one of the vital components of a win-win relationship. This makes affiliates satisfied and also, you can learn from affiliates about what the public opinion says about your products and obtain their insights better. You can communicate with your affiliates using a variety of channels, including emails, chatting, messaging, social media, etc.

4. Forget to keep track of your affiliates' performance

The last frequent affiliate marketing mistake to make is not using a monitoring tool to track affiliates's marketing efforts, not only their earned commissions. It's tough to know whether your affiliate marketing network is operating properly and efficiently without actual statistics. Thus, tracking and optimization are always important aspects of affiliate marketing, especially during this special hectic time of the year.

Proactively monitoring your affiliates will guarantee that they do not harm your reputation and will also assist you in improving the insufficient things. That's why you need the help of an auto affiliate management tool to keep track of your affiliates' performance. With all that in mind, it's ascertained that you acknowledge the operation of affiliate marketing, its superior advantages, and ways to take advantage of it perfectly this holiday season. Rock your business with affiliate marketing now!

3.3 Social & Content

3.3.1 Use social media to promote your brand & drive traffic

Social media is a powerful, low-cost tool for driving traffic and, as a result, revenue to your website. Building an audience and driving tons of website traffic will take time if you're starting from scratch, but the initial investment will be well worth it.

BENEFITS of having your BRAND on SOCIAL MEDIA

YOU CAN MONITOR GENERAL OPINION ABOUT YOUR PRODUCT

YOU CAN ENJOY UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITIES

YOUR WEBSITES CAN GET MORE VIEWS, IF YOU WORK SMARTLY

YOU CAN KEEP YOUR CUSTOMERS UPDATED AND ENGAGED

YOU CAN CREATE A FAVORABLE PERCEPTION

YOU CAN EASILY DEVELOP A TARGET MARKET

80% of internet users prefer to get online discount and coupons

43% of all online customers are social media fans and followers

20% of facebook users have been influenced to purchase by seeing ads

85% of internet users have facebook accounts

49% of internet users have twitter accounts

42% of internet users have endorsed a brand at least once in their status update

67% of twitter users are likely to buy brands they follow

Sources: Marketing original

92% of small business owners who use social media believe it is beneficial to their operations. Why? With the global social media user base expected to reach 2.5 billion this year, there has never been a better time to find and connect with your target audience. So, how can you use social media to help your business? Start by increasing traffic to your website. I'll give you 6 simple and effective tips to help you do just that!

3.3.1.1 Increase the visibility of your social media profiles

People look to your profile or bio section to learn more about your company. It should quickly communicate the value proposition of your brand while also establishing your tone and style. Social media now accounts for 31% of all referral traffic. By adding these backlinks to your site, you can get a piece of the action.

The more distinct your bio is – without sacrificing clarity – the more likely you will be able to capture and resonate with your ideal audience. Make sure to include a link to your website's homepage on all of your social media profiles.

3.3.1.2 Encourage social media sharing and reviews

One of the primary reasons social media is so effective at increasing the performance of an e-commerce website is that users share information with one another. In fact, social media networks exist solely to facilitate sharing. This sharing behavior can be used to help your online business grow. You have the potential to gain one new customer for every time one of your posts is shared.

Positive social media feedback is also essential. People believe other customers more than they believe you, regardless of how sincere you are. Reading a post by one of your followers that positively reviews your product can help dispel any reservations a prospect may have about visiting your website.

3.3.1.3 Make it as simple as possible for people to share your content

Visitors who like something on your website may want to share it with their friends or social media followers. As a result, by including properly configured social media buttons on your website or blog, you should make it extremely simple to do so.

Many people make the mistake of adding social media buttons without first ensuring that the content is properly shared. When you click the share button on a post, make sure that the title, description, and image are all properly formatted. Otherwise, users will not take the time to fix things before clicking the share button.

3.3.1.4 Using hashtags to increase reach

Hashtags are widely used on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram. Hashtags can help you conduct research to see what people are talking about in relation to your brand and products, and they can also help interested parties find your content. All you have to do is include popular hashtags in your social media posts.

3.3.1.5 It must be done at the appropriate time

When your target audience is most active – their "peak time" – is the best time to post on social

media.

Although several studies have claimed that one time of day is superior to another for posting, the best way to find out is through trial and error. Post at all times of the day using post scheduling tools and see which times and days (online studies claim Thursdays and Fridays have 18% higher engagement) work best for your brand and products.

3.3.1.6 Attract more attention by using images and video

The current power ranking for those three content types is video first, followed by images, and text last. Rich media is far more appealing to people than plain text.

Each social media platform has its own set of strengths when it comes to supporting the various types of media you can use to engage with your customers. Learn about the various post formats, as well as the image sizes and resolutions that are recommended. Choose images with eye-catching colors, and if there is text, make sure it can be read in a small size.

Video is by far the most effective medium, with video posts generating far more traffic than those with images or text. Unboxing videos are a popular type of video post that can entice viewers to visit your website and buy the product featured in the video.

3.3.2 Leverage user-generated content

User-generated content (UGC) is any type of content created by individuals (rather than brands) and published to an online or social network. User-generated content has been around as long as social networks and customer review sites have.

How can you make the most of user-generated content? There are numerous ways to use user-generated content to increase website conversions.

3.3.2.1 Encourage customer reviews and feedback

According to studies, 92% of customers now read online reviews. Furthermore, after reading ten reviews, 88% of these consumers form opinions about brands. The more reviews you receive, the more persuasive your offers will be to potential customers. The key to successfully requesting a review is to keep the process as simple as possible. Remove all potential impediments, and you'll be surprised by the flood of comments.

Simply send an email to your customer with a link to the review page in the body of the message. Requesting a review as soon as your customers receive their package is ideal. They are more excited right now and would love to share their experience.

3.3.2.2 Proactively respond to customers' complaints

Customers enjoy discussing their emotions and widely disseminating them on social media. Seize the opportunity to reestablish their trust as soon as you discover complaints about your product or service on your social media page.

Remember that negative feedback isn't always bad for business. Prepare a thorough response strategy. Take action as soon as you become aware of a complaint. Check your social media pages for brand mentions and set up Google Alerts to monitor for brand mentions on other websites and online listings.

This will also assist in emphasizing excellent customer service. If you can effectively address your customers' pain points, consider this a huge factor in growing your business. You will not only attract new customers, but you will also strengthen your relationship with current ones.

3.3.2.3 Encourage the use of social media

Similarly, you should encourage your customers to share their product-related social media experiences. Begin a hashtag campaign on your preferred social platforms to encourage customers to post real-life images of your products.

To increase your social shares, create blog topics that people will want to read. Utilize BuzzSumo to find trending and interesting topics, and investigate your target audience's issues on Facebook groups and forum sites. This will also help you develop your buyer persona.

3.3.2.4 Feature user-generated images on your website

Displaying user-generated images is an excellent way to increase the authenticity of your product images and influence buyer purchase decisions. This not only shows the products being used by other people, allowing other customers to imagine themselves using or wearing the product, but it also allows other customers to easily purchase those products.

3.3.2.5 Build a community

To start conversations, create a membership site for your audience to discuss your brand, product, or domain. The creation of a brand community results in user-generated content that promotes the brand. Users will talk about their experiences, ask questions, and respond to them. Customers returning to the brand's website on a regular basis not only increases customer engagement, but also sales.

3.3.2.6 Make use of user-generated content to fuel your paid advertising

Consider using user-generated content to power your ads because people are paying less attention to Facebook ads and more attention to genuine organic content. In your paid campaigns, instead of lifeless stock photos, your audiences will now see real users and customers.

Your ads will not appear to be advertisements, resulting in a more seamless experience for everyone scrolling through the Facebook Newsfeed. This strategy provides you with a number of benefits. Your advertisements get more attention – more likes, comments, and shares. Facebook will give your ads a high relevance score. You distinguish yourself from competitors who do not use UGC in their social media advertisements.

3.3.3 Create a promotional content calendar

Source: SEJ

A content calendar is used to plan and organize your content for distribution across multiple channels, including social media. This implies that you establish an authoritative source that your marketing team or, if you are a freelancer, marketing clients can easily access.

They are typically constructed in one of three formats: printed paper, spreadsheets, or software services.

- **Paper Calendars:** This is the traditional method for those who prefer hand-written organization.
- **Spreadsheets:** A low-cost method for pre-planning posts.
- **Software Services:** A professional option with strong automation and time-saving features.

3.3.3.1 Learn about your target audience

Understanding who your customers are is the first step in ensuring that any content created engages with the right people and achieves its goals, whether those goals are to increase brand awareness, traffic, and conversions, or to build quality links to improve your search ranking.

Most businesses will collect information from people who have previously used their services or purchased their products in order to create a broad picture of potential customers. Another way to collect data for your personas is to use social media. You can use tools, it allows you to see a company's audience's demographics, such as gender, relationship status, interest sets, job niches, and so on.

3.3.3.2 Take a look at your social media platforms and content

Creating a clear picture of your current social media efforts will allow you to identify areas for improvement as well as new opportunities. An audit is essential for fine-tuning your content strategy and increasing your ROI.

Make time to go over all of your social assets. Then you can be certain that you will approach your updated social strategy with the most up-to-date information. That is, information that is unique to your audience, accounts, and brand.

3.3.3.3 Utilize research tools

Source: explainerd.com

You can also use a variety of research tools for different types of content to find more detailed information that will yield better results. The right keyword research tool can help you create a successful content strategy and decide which keywords to target for SEO and PPC campaigns.

After you've brainstormed and chosen keywords, use a tool like topic research to display related topics, recent headlines, and search engine questions. Finding related topics and questions that people are asking can help you fine-tune the areas you want to focus on and when you should focus on them.

3.3.3.4 Conduct a content audit
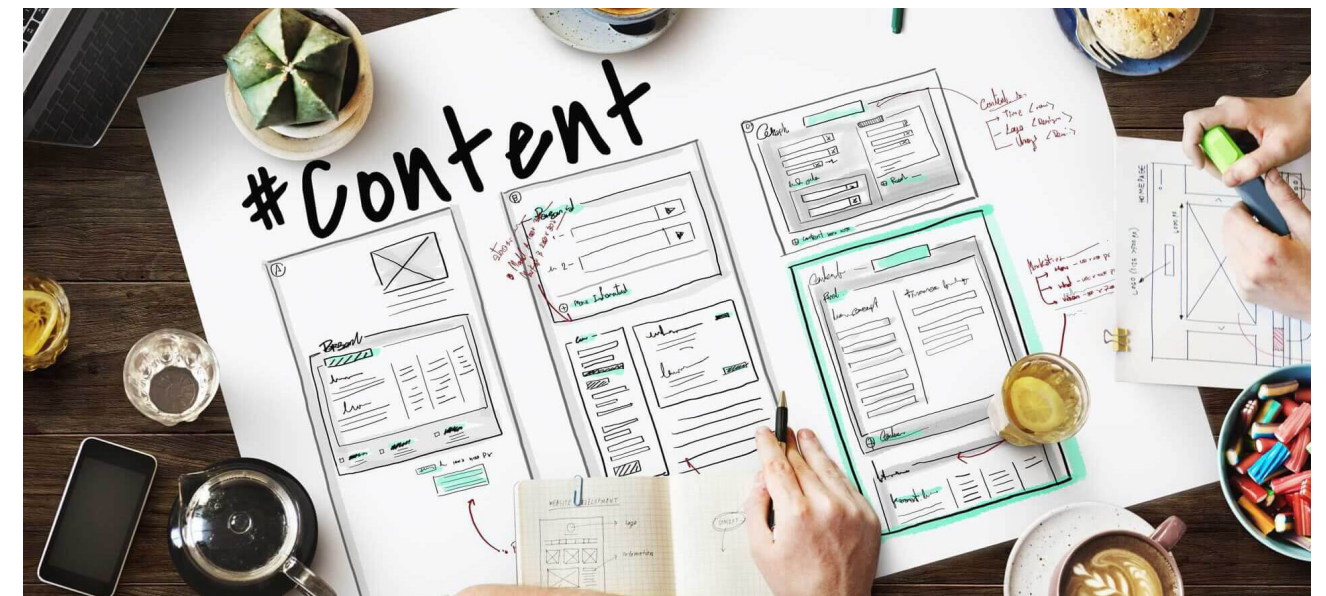
Source: explainerd.com

Conducting an audit can help you get started with what and when to post for the best levels of audience engagement. Examine your social media analytics from sources such as Facebook and/or Twitter Insights to help you with this.

The content audit tool analyzes your site's existing pages and recommends what you should rewrite, update, or remove entirely. This can help you get a head start on content creation ideas by repurposing existing content.

3.3.3.5 Create a content library to house your assets

Some refer to these as content repositories, media resource databases, or digital asset banks. Dropbox, Google Drive, your company's internal network, or database software designed specifically for this purpose are all options.

3.3.3.6 Begin composing your posts

You're probably bursting at the seams with ideas at this point, right? Take some time to go through that old "misc social" folder and start compiling some individual posts. As you work, consider how your calendar feels. You may want to reduce the level of detail if it is too time-consuming and finicky. Perhaps it isn't detailed enough, and you should add a few columns.

3.3.3.7 Experiment with different posting times

Much research has been conducted to determine the best time to send and publish content on social media, email, blogs, and so on. While I always recommend testing these things for yourself, here is some of the best advice we've found:

- **Facebook:** According to Buffer's investigation into Facebook's News Feed algorithm, engagement rates are 18% higher on Thursdays and Fridays, and 32% higher on weekends. The best times to post vary, with statistics ranging from 1pm for the most shares to 3pm for the most clicks; in general, posting in the early afternoon is a good time.
- **Twitter:** According to a recent Twitter study, 81% of users are more likely to be on Twitter during their commute home, and the peak time for retweets is early evening, while extensive research by the Buffer team suggests that the best engagement occurs in the early hours of the morning. Tweets between 2-3 a.m. receive the most clicks on average.
- **Emails**: According to MailChimp research, the best times to send your newsletters are 8 a.m. – 11 a.m. and 12 – 2 p.m., but timings vary greatly depending on the audience.
- **Posts on the blog:** Last year, Maven examined nearly 5,000 blogs and discovered a strong correlation between those who published posts on the weekend and a higher average number of social shares, attributing this to a lack of 'competition' for headspace and engagement.

3.4 Shipping, Handling & Customer Services

3.4.1 Make free shipping profitable

Source: The Dot Store

Customers value free shipping. Although free shipping sounds appealing, you do not have access to it. Shipping costs are increasing, which means you could easily lose a significant amount of money. The challenge is to provide free shipping in an appealing way while remaining profitable. We compiled 4 actionable tips to help you evaluate these factors and choose the most profitable free shipping strategy.

3.4.1.1 Set a minimum order amount

Offering free shipping with a high enough value threshold to protect your profits is an easy way to avoid losing money on small transactions. Allowing customers to access free shipping for all order sizes is a common blunder made by businesses when they first start offering "free shipping." This is a problem because the lower the order size, the lower your profit margin after shipping costs. However, it is relatively simple to correct. All you have to do is set a minimum order amount that allows you to maintain a healthy profit margin while offering free shipping. For example, you could offer free shipping on all orders over $25. As a result, your customers can mix and match items and have them shipped together in the same box. Furthermore, the order's shipping fee is applied to a much higher order price, eliminating the possibility of you breaking even or going into the red after paying for shipping costs.

3.4.1.2 Provide free shipping on selected items

Most stores do not profit from every item sold, and shipping costs vary greatly depending on destination, size, and weight. Cart-stuffers like lens cleaners and microfiber cloth are sold even in high-end eyewear stores. Offering free shipping on low-margin items like these could quickly lead to a loss.

Another possibility is to restrict free shipping to specific products. This works for items with a low shipping cost and a high enough markup to keep the business profitable after shipping fees are deducted.

3.4.1.3 Free shipping promotions

Some companies simply cannot afford to offer free shipping all of the time. Perhaps they can't break even with a minimum amount threshold, or their market is too competitive for them to include shipping costs in their product prices. If any of these scenarios sound familiar, don't worry; free shipping can still be incorporated into your business through a limited-time promotional event. Customers despite missing out on a good deal even more than they despise having to pay for shipping.

3.4.1.4 Develop a membership program

If you want to offer free shipping to your customers without breaking the bank, create a paid membership program and charge a premium for it. These programs provide a variety of benefits, ranging from exclusive discounts and rewards to (you guessed it) free shipping.

True, these programs are popular, but is the revenue generated by membership dues enough to cover the costs of providing free shipping? When Amazon first introduced its Prime membership program in 2005, at a cost of $119 per member, it was able to offset its shipping costs by more than $475 million. How? Members spend two to three times more than nonmembers because membership programs, when done correctly, incentivize customers to buy more.

3.4.2 Offer competitive delivery options

Providing customers with a variety of delivery options builds trust in your brand, which leads to increased sales, retention, and customer satisfaction. Whether it's a no-hassle returns policy or same- and next-day delivery, online shopping expectations have risen to the point where if you don't provide a specific delivery option, your sales will suffer.

You may have experienced this yourself when making an online purchase; if what you require is not available, it is all too easy to abandon ship and shop elsewhere, isn't it? Here's how offering delivery can benefit your business.

3.4.2.1 Maintaining competitiveness

If a customer is in desperate need of an item and finds it on both your website and one of a competitor, they are more likely to choose the one that offers fast delivery. There are many reasons why people might need something as soon as possible, whether it's a forgotten birthday gift or a replacement for something broken, so having it as an option at checkout is worthwhile.

3.4.2.2 Next-day and nominated delivery options

On the other hand, almost all retailers who sell business-to-business products provide next-day delivery. Nominated delivery occurs when customers have the option of selecting the date of delivery of a product or service. Large e-commerce sites are far more likely to support this option. As an example, grocery and wine businesses are more likely to offer free delivery, with approximately 44% of grocers allowing customers to choose a time and day for delivery. Almost no business-to-business e-commerce sites or entertainment retailers offer designated delivery.

3.4.2.3 Saturday delivery options

Saturday delivery is common among e-commerce retailers, with roughly one-third providing it to customers.

3.4.2.4 Same-day delivery options

Same-day delivery is in high demand and is expected to grow exponentially in the future. According to one study, more than half (56%) of consumers aged 18-34 expect to have the option of same-day delivery, and 61 percent are willing to pay more for same-day delivery.

3.4.2.5 In-store pickup

Another popular new delivery option for retail businesses with physical locations is in-store pickup. Customers can use this service to shop for items online, check out, and pick them up at a local store within a specified time frame.

Customers are increasingly requesting to pick up their purchases in-store. In-store pickup is a great option for refrigerated or frozen items that would otherwise be costly and difficult to ship; small items that are too inexpensive to justify the cost of shipping; or as an additional option to offer your customers in order for them to receive their items quickly.

3.4.3. Provide exceptional customer service

Source: Internet

There are 3 types of customer service: standard, average, and exceptional. Here are 5 qualities of great customer service: Empathetic - Generous - Solution-driven - Timely - Unexpected.

While brands can foster customer loyalty by offering amazing products, an extensive knowledge base, and helpful staff, these qualities are unremarkable. In fact, buyers consider those factors to be the bare minimum in brand-customer relationships.

Exceptional customer service, on the other hand, seeks to surprise and delight customers through the use of unexpected strategies that social audiences will applaud. Here's some ways to providing exceptional customer service:

3.4.3.1 Respond as soon as possible

According to 66% of people, the most important aspect of any online customer experience is to value their time. Responding to customer inquiries as soon as possible is a critical component of providing excellent customer service. Speed should be prioritized, especially for minor issues that don't require much time to resolve. Make certain that you do not keep customers waiting.

3.4.3.2 Begin and end all interactions with customers with "thank you"

The simplest solutions are often the most effective, and starting and ending every customer interaction with a thank you is one of the most effective ways to improve customer service experience.

Beginning each interaction with a thank you shows the customer that you appreciate the fact that they chose your company first out of all the options available to them. Thank you after completing your business, even if it does not result in a transaction, is simply good manners that leaves the potential customer with a favorable impression of both your people and your company.

Source: copper.com

3.4.3.3 Make your service unique

According to 40% of customers, better human service is desired. In other words, they want to be treated as more than a ticket number. They become enraged when they are not treated as individuals, when they receive boilerplate responses, or when they are tossed around to different people like a tennis ball.

Customers prefer to interact with people rather than businesses. It's one of the reasons why many companies send out birthday gifts to their customers. Do you know not only your customers' names, but also their birthdays? What about their hobbies or interests? Providing a personal touch when possible is an important way to show your customers that you know them and care about them.

3.4.3.4 Go wherever your customers are

The proactive use of customer contact information for post-transaction and post-visit follow up is critical to the success of your customer experience strategy. These calls and messages are opportunities for them to go over the benefits of their potential or recently purchased product or service in case they have encountered problems or thought of new questions to ask since their visit.

Source: copper.com

3.4.3.5 Gather and respond to customer feedback

You don't have to guess when it comes to improving your customer service experience. Customers will tell you if you actively seek feedback from them. You can get a sense of your customer base's satisfaction and areas where you're falling short of expectations by conducting an email survey.

3.4.3.6 Following up with customers later

Contact them later to inquire about their experience with your product and service if you want to go above and beyond with your customer service. Spending time reconnecting with customers who have been silent or unresponsive can make them feel valued and special.

Reaching out to customers after a long absence can also serve as a reminder that your product or service is still available and that the customer service is excellent. Following up with an old customer may even prompt them to make another purchase or provide a referral to someone else.

Chapter 4:

Best Shopify Apps for boosting sales in Holiday Season

Building an e-commerce marketing program over the Holidays can sometimes feel intimidating and tedious. Instead of skipping this opportunity to increase sales to double your revenue by the end of the year, jumpstart with the appropriate Shopify applications.

In only a few hours, your e-commerce marketing plan may be up and running smoothly. No matter which app you use, all assure you that the outcome will be professional, impressive, and attractive to shoppers.
Let's dive in.

4.1 PageFly Landing Page Builder

STORE DESIGN | MARKETING | CONVERSION | MERCHANDISING

PageFly Landing Page Builder
by PageFly

Build Landing, Product Page. Compatible with Online Store 2.0

Overall rating ★4.9

★★★★★ (5319)
★★★★☆ (209)
★★★☆☆ (27)
★★☆☆☆ (25)
★☆☆☆☆ (67)

View all 5647 reviews

Add app

Free plan available

Source: Shopify App Store

PageFly is the top Shopify Page Builder, trusted by more than 100,000 Shopify and Shopify Plus merchants. PageFly brings you a complete package to build and optimize your store with just simple drag-and-drop; creates a seamless digital experience across devices; strong compatibility with other Shopify apps to boost sales. Moreover, Free plan is available with 24/7 live chat support.

Developer: PageFly
Rating: 4.9/5
Pricing:
1. Free plan available with all features access
2. Paid plans start at $19/month
Key features:
- A complete package to build and optimize your store with just simple drag-and-drop; no coding required creates a seamless digital experience across devices.
- Create various page types at ease: Sales landing pages; "Coming soon" pages; Product pages, Pricing pages; Collection pages; About us pages; Contact us pages; FAQ pages; Blog pages.
- Library of 70+ high-converting page templates
- 30+ integration with Best Shopify apps to boost sales
- 24/7 live chat support

4.2 AVADA: SMS, Email Marketing
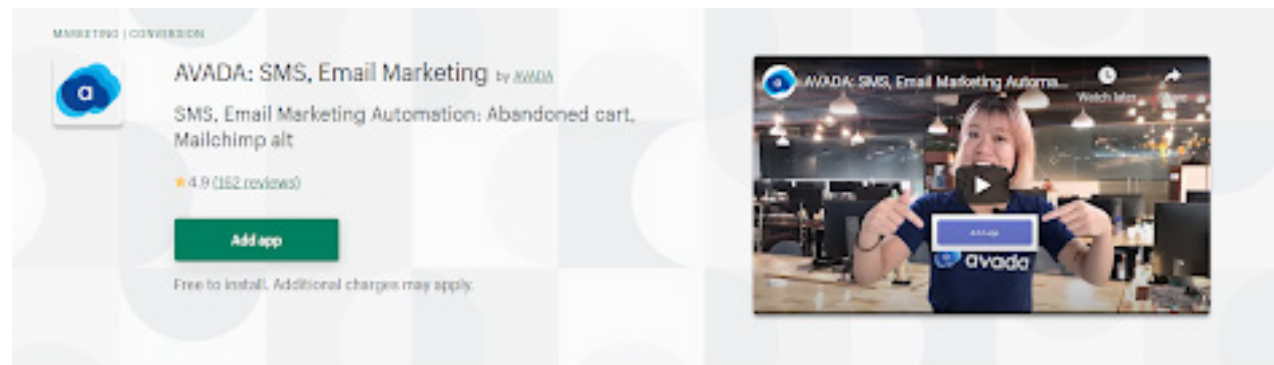
Source: Shopify App Store

AVADA: SMS, Email Marketing is one of the most outstanding and reasonable solutions for any Shopify merchant that aims to convert their customers and build long-life customer relationships. Designed to optimize Abandoned Cart campaigns, AVADA Email Marketing follows up your visitors and reminds them to continue their purchase quickly.

With an user-friendly interface, AVADA Email Marketing is simple to use for even non-technical people. And for those who have no ideas on designing, the app does support email templates that are proven to work well and ready-to-run right away.

Moreover, you can easily manage your contacts with automatic data synced from your Shopify store. Segmenting them and targeting specific segments for your emails will help you get the best results possible.

Developer: AVADA Commerce
Rating: 5.0/5
Pricing: Free
Key features:
- Cover lost sales with Abandoned Cart Email automation
- Welcome emails to new customers, new subscribes, unsubscribers
- Drag and drop email builders for non-tech people
- Ready-to-use email templates
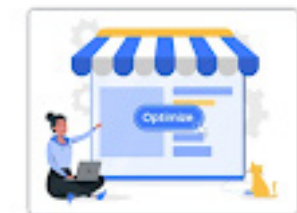- Stunning Spin-to-win & Popup to collect leads easily

4.3 AVADA SEO: Image Optimizer
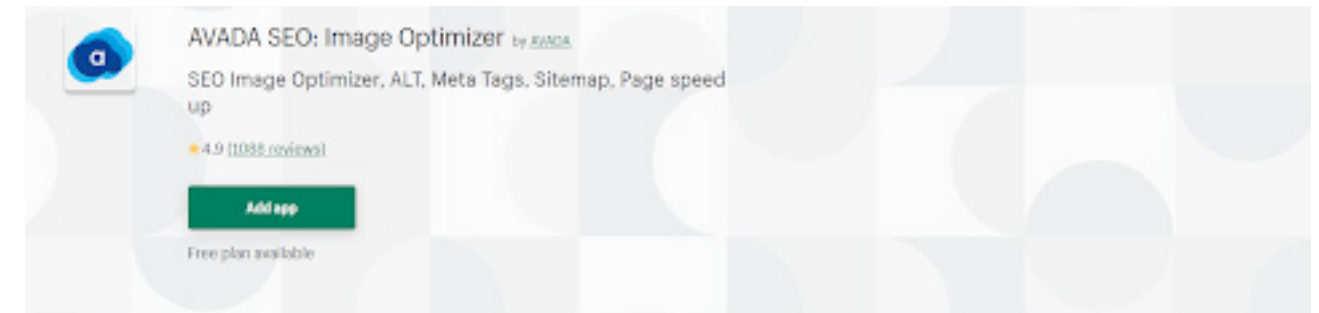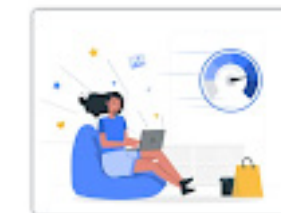
Source: Shopify App Store

SEO Suite app is a perfect solution that helps you to eliminate slow loading pages and make websites friendly with Google Search engine without requiring any technical skills. This app is a comprehensive solution for an optimized website as key features such as image, structure data, meta tags, HTML Sitemap are well-supported.

Specifically, with SEO Suite by AVADA, you can auto-inserts ALT tags to your images as well as compress them to fasten the loading speed of your site. Moreover, auto-add Google structured data helps the search engine understand your page content easier and then prioritize it on the searching results page. Not yet, optimized meta tags with ready-to-use format assist you to SEO your site better.
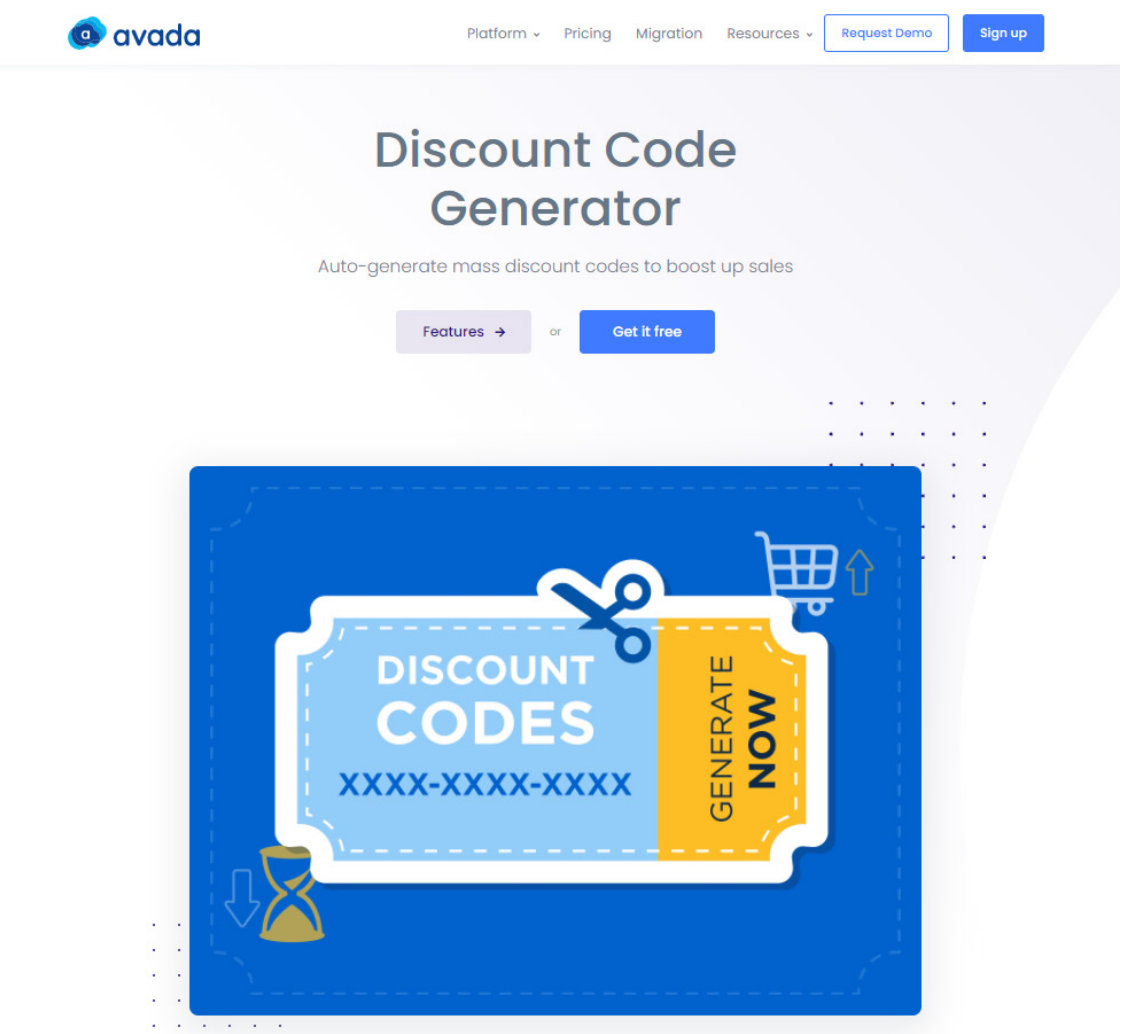
Developer: AVADA Commerce
Rating: 4.9/5
Key features:
- Optimize image to increase the loading speed of your site
- Support auto-add Google structure data for highly-ranking results
- Optimize meta tag with informative data
- Redirect 404 pages to entertain customers
- Helps users navigate your website easily with HTML Sitemap

4.4 AVADA Discount Code Generator

Source: Shopify App Store

AVADA Discount Code Generator is built to support Shopify stores to create a group of discount codes, solving Shopify's inability to generate bulk coupon codes at once.

This 5-star app has many useful features, such as generating discount codes in bulk for the same discount rule or creating custom codes your way.

Developer: AVADA Commerce

Rating: 5.0/5

Pricing: Free

Key features:

- Generate any quantity of codes for the same discount rule.
- Produce unlimited unique codes randomly based on a specific pattern. You only need to enter the code quantity you want to generate and the pattern (format) of those codes.
- Custom codes can be distributed in your physical stores to bring a more personalized customer experience.
- Find any code you have created by entering its entire format.
- Prevent discount code abuse with distinctive code series.

4.5 Messent Text SMS Cart Recovery by Transcy
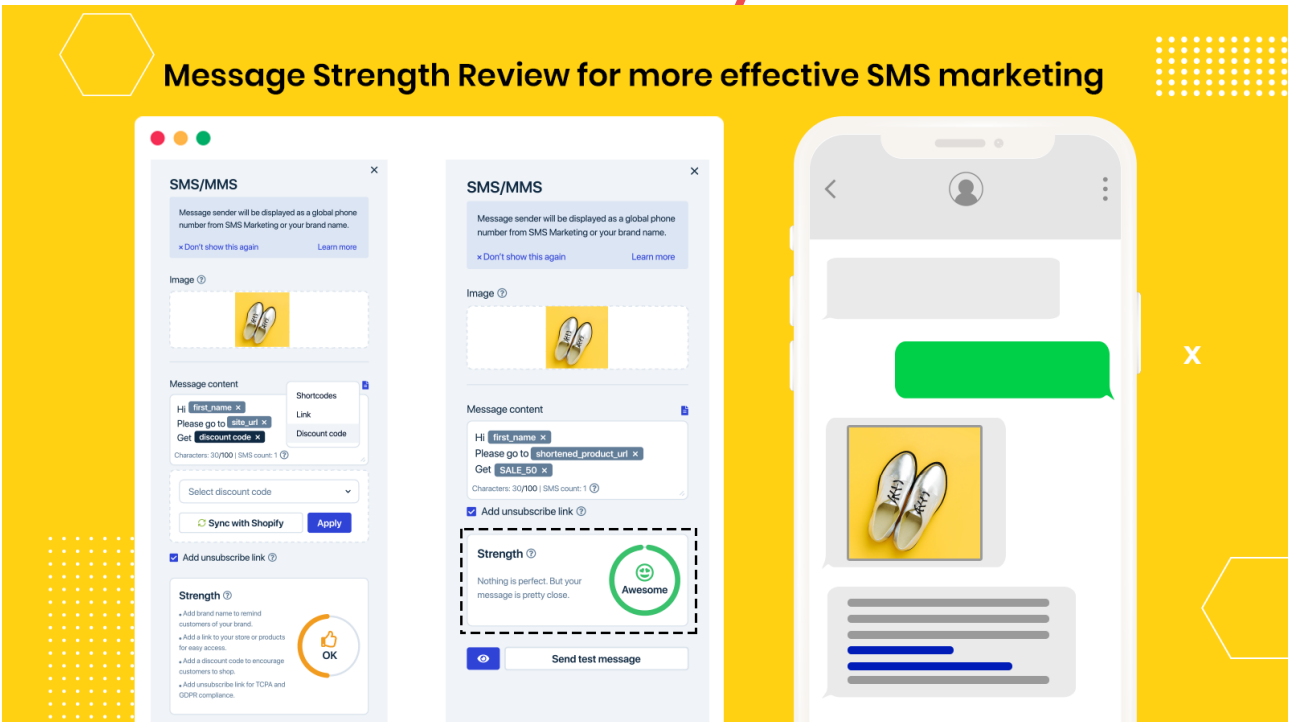
Source: Shopify App Store

Messent by Transcy enables businesses to engage customers in real-time with messages personalized to their preferences. Messent lets you estimate the strength of your SMS messages and get suggestions for enhancing what can be improved in a nutshell.

Developer: Transcy

Rating: 4.6/5

Pricing: Free to install

Key features:

- Target audience based on attributions (location, behavior, email, order, spending, etc.) for more accuracy.
- A smart schedule system with a flexible time zone allows you to approach customers without disturbing them.
- Shorten link: Help users manage the SMS length, make the reader focus more on the message, reduce the distraction.
- Insert discount code: Simplify merchants' next promotion events with efficient discount code storage.
- Sent test: Send draft version, showing how the message would be in actuality.
- Get started with an SMS automation campaign straight away by using available SMS marketing flows.

4.6 Social Publish by Socialhead

Source: Shopify App Store
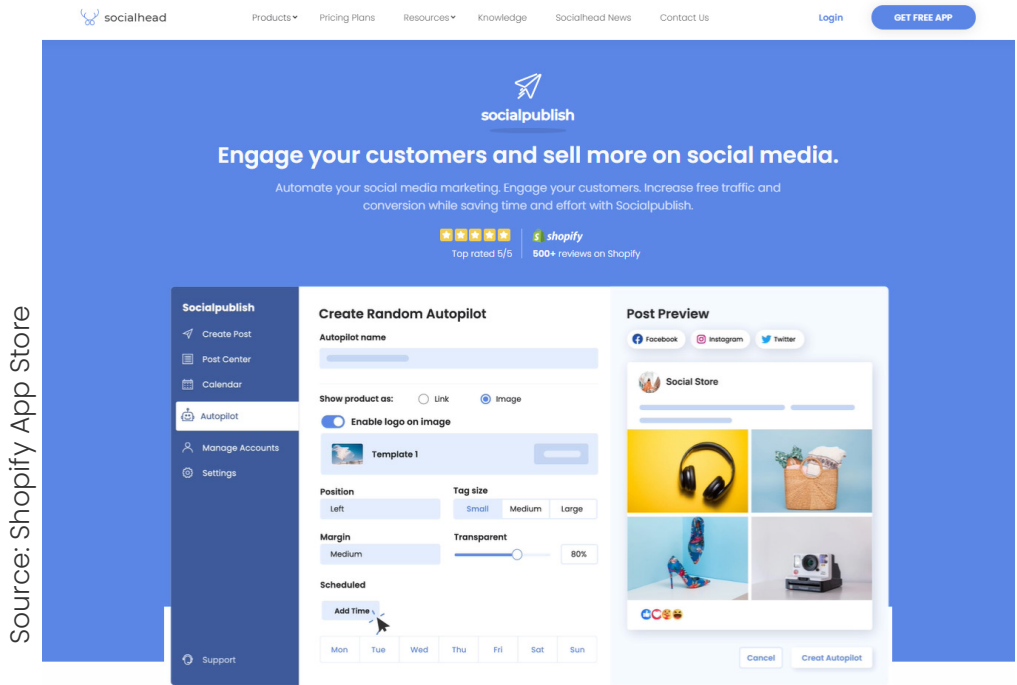
Socialpublish app helps Shopify businesses of all sizes capture customer attention and increase conversions during the holiday season by automatically marketing their items on social networks like Facebook and Twitter.

Among its many features, Socialhead Social Publish provides you with surpassing capabilities, such as automatically promoting products and discounts, publishing products from selected collections to social networks, and posting customer reviews to increase credibility. Moreover, to enhance sales and brand awareness on social networks, you can add your logo into product images and automatically sync discount codes generated by your Shopify store.

**Developer:** Socialhead

Rating: 3.7/5

Pricing:

1. 14-day free trial
2. Free - Free
3. Standard - $9.95/month
4. Premium - $19.95/month
5. Platinum - $49.95/month

Key Features of Social Publish by Socialhead:

- Auto-post your new products and discounts on social media to engage and convert your customers.
- Schedule posts on Facebook, Twitter... at the same time to save time and reduce manual processes.
- Organize, create, and edit your posts directly in a drag-and-drop calendar.
- Embed the brand logo in the image to increase credibility and stand out from the competition.
- Create stunning holiday posts with Social Publish free post templates that help engage and turn followers into buyers.

4.7 Ali Reviews by FireApps
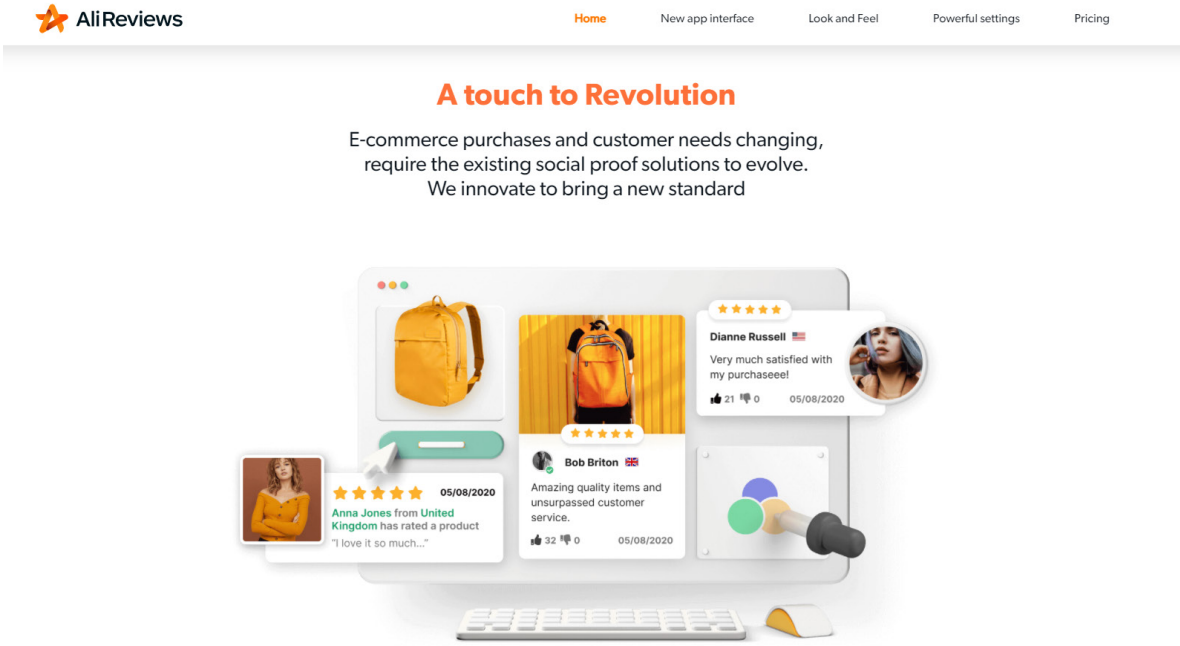
Source: Shopify App Store

Ali Reviews is a professional and all-around review app for Shopify businesses. With Ali Reviews, you can collect reviews by sending requests via SMS and emails or encourage customers to leave reviews with attractive discount codes. Right off the bat, you can showcase those reviews in different widget styles to impress shoppers from the get-go. Ali Reviews by FireApps is fully responsive with all Shopify themes. Build a customer reviews corner and shine online in minutes.

Developer: FireApps

Rating: 4.9/5

Pricing: 7-day free trial

1. Starter - $9.90/month. Free $0.3 SMS credits
2. Essential - $19.90/month. Free $5 SMS credits
3. Premium - $49.90/month. Free $15 SMS credits
4. Enterprise - $99.90/month. Free $35 SMS credits

Key features:

- Collect reviews by sending customizable and automated review request emails and SMS.
- Reward reviewers with discounts for photo reviews to increase retention and repeat purchases, especially in 2021 BFCM, Christmas, New Year.
- Showcase customer reviews with 9+ widget styles, such as Review box, Review popup, and 4 styles of Carousel slider on all pages to increase product discovery and encourage buyers.
- Drag-and-drop review widgets without coding. It is easy-to-use as a Shopify theme editor with a live preview.
- Display personalized reviews based on customer info (location/ AOV/ total spending), on-site behavior (products in the cart, viewed products).
- Display reviews of key products to upsell/cross-sell and increase Average Order Value.
- Migrate reviews from other Shopify product reviews apps like Loox, Yotpo, Judge.me, or Stamped.

4.8 Ali Orders by FireApps

Easy to customize your products before 1-click push all to shop
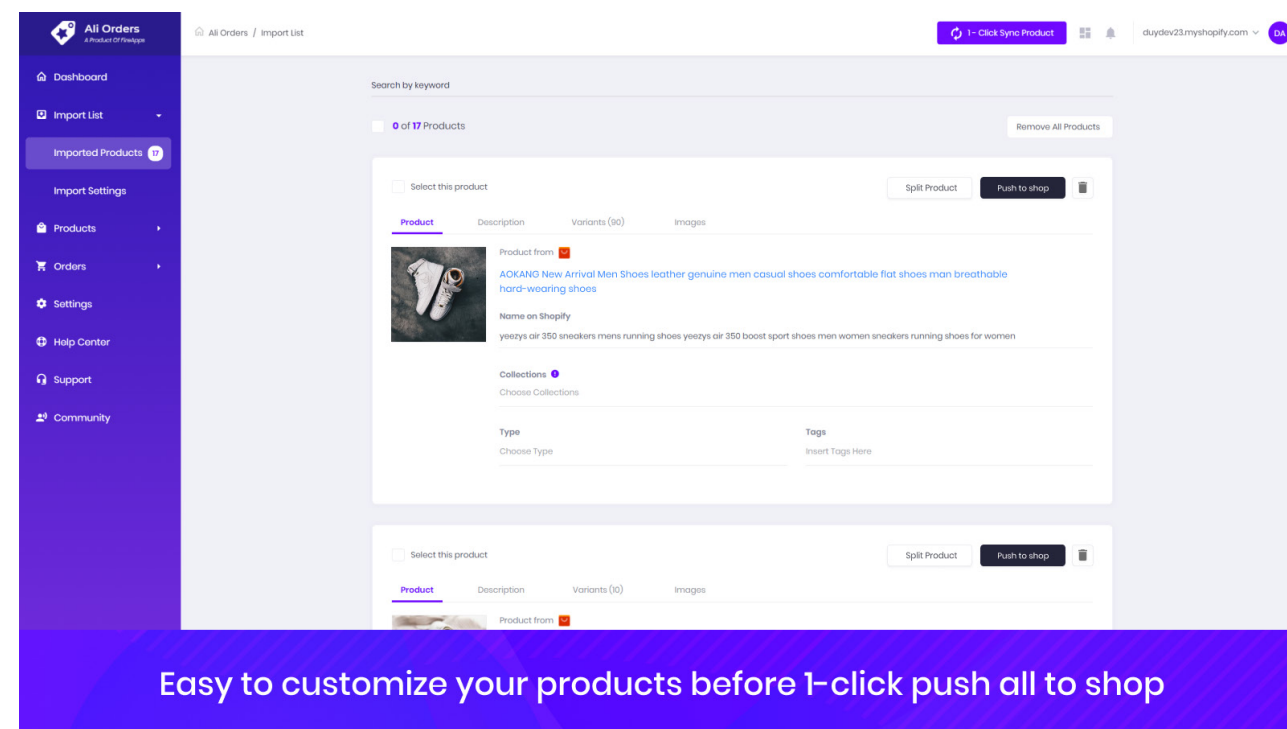
Source: Shopify App Store

The Ali Orders app provides dropshippers with an easy way to import products from AliExpress to their dropshipping store and complete orders automatically in seconds. It can assist you in quickly locating products with delivery within the range.

Similar to other apps like Dropified, Spocket, CJDropshipping, Yakkyoku, Modalyst, TopDser, GlowRoad, it is easy to switch from Oberlo, with entire data: product's link on AliExpress and AliExpress order number. Ali Orders integrates with Ali Reviews, Ali Hunter, AliExpress, 17track, ePacket, and AliExpress Captcha.

Developer: FireApps

Rating: 4.5/5

Pricing:

1. 7-day free trial
2. Premium - $19/month

Key features:

- Import products in bulk from AliExpress in one click with a payment method like ePacket.
- Easily edit built-in product information, including title, price, tags, categories, images, and more.
- Automatically update product prices and stock with advanced pricing rules.
- Seamlessly sync orders from your store with AliExpress orders.
- Automate solving captcha with lightning speed and protect your orders with the intelligent logic engine.
- Support users to filter products by shipping methods, shipping fees, product prices when adding a Chrome extension.

4.9 Swift Page Speed Optimizer by PerfectApps
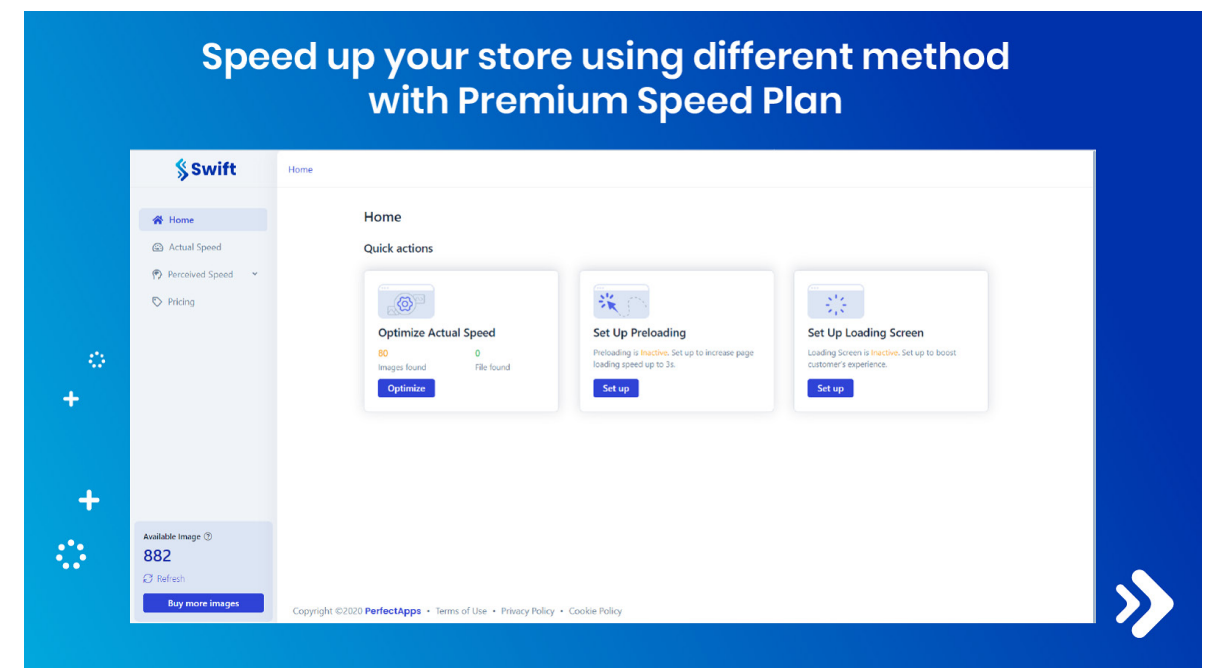
Source: Shopify App Store

Swift is a Shopify page speed optimization solution that provides an innovative approach based on powerful tools including Google Lighthouse, PageSpeed Insights, GTMetrix, Pingdom to accelerate store performance. Swift's advanced smart image compression technology allows you to compress and optimize large image size images rapidly.

**Developer:** PerfectApps

Rating: 4.7/5

Pricing:

1. 7-day free trial
2. Basic - Free
3. Premium - $19/month

Key features:

- Auto-optimize new images & files.
- Minifies JS, CSS, HTML, theme asset files to reduce page size and speed up the store initial load time, FCP, LCP, TBT.
- Automatically defers the loading of images, leaving them "off-screen" & inline critical CSS with Smart Lazy Load technology, so they do not affect your store speed.
- Predict what page a visitor will visit next, or which link is most likely to be clicked, then preloads those contents, font caching, and delivers the page right after it is requested to help reduce bounce rates.
- Make a store faster 600 milliseconds on average from loading time on Homepage speed and increase faster 3x speed than other apps using Preload.
- Accelerate store speed from analyzing stores, optimizing redundant code and jQuery, to testing scores from tools and 3rd apps (Livechat, Quick Announcement Bar, Google Analytics / Tag Manager, Facebook Pixel, Klaviyo, and more).
- No coding is required, only follow instructions and click.

4.10 Shippo by Shippo
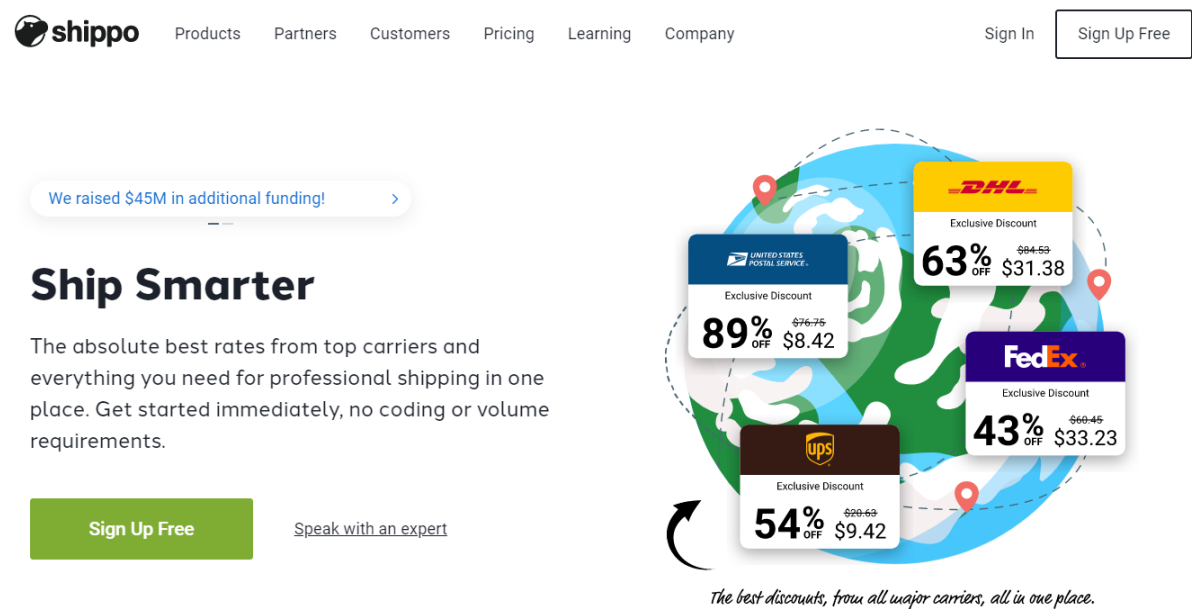
Source: Shopify App Store

The [Shippo](#) shipping app offers the best rates at over 85 carriers globally, including regional carriers only available on Shippo. It is a nifty app for you to use to enhance your transit during the holidays. In the app features, you will find that Shippo allows for automatic order synchronization and bulk printing of up to 100 labels at a time.

**Developer:** Shippo

Rating: 4.1/5

Pricing:

1. Starter - Free
2. Professional - $10/mo
3. Premier - [Connect with sales](#)

Key features:

- Automatically syncs package information back to Shopify to keep you and your customers updated with real-time tracking information.
- Build your brand with customizable tracking pages, shipping emails, packing slips, and more.
- Create a post-purchase experience that brings customers back by including return labels right inside the box.
- Generate labels faster with saved and pre-filled package information.
- Import orders from your Shopify store and manage shipments from one place.
- Simplify international shipping with auto-generated customs forms and commercial invoices.
- Split orders into multiple shipments to send partially-fulfilled orders, or packages to different locations.
- Protect your business with insurance for premium shipments, one-of-a-kind goods, and international packages sent with USPS, UPS, FedEx, DHL Express, and Canada Post.

4.11 Flits: Customer Account Page
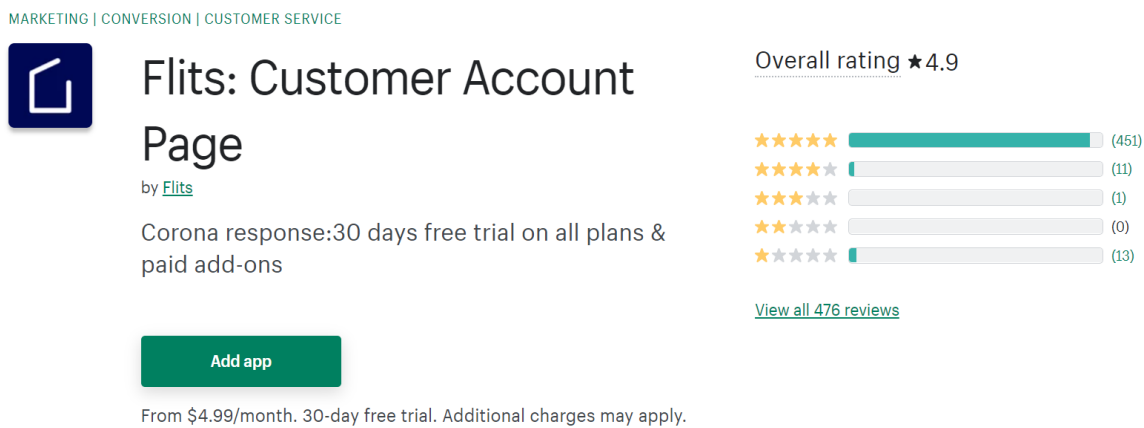
Source: Shopify App Store

[Flits](#) is the first Shopify app that allows merchants to enhance their existing customer account page to a beautiful and comprehensive account page with features like re-order, recently viewed items, etc. Merchants can transform their customer account page and set it up to reflect their brand. Flits also gives four paid add-ons (Wishlist, Social Login, Reward program, and Advanced order filter) as an option.

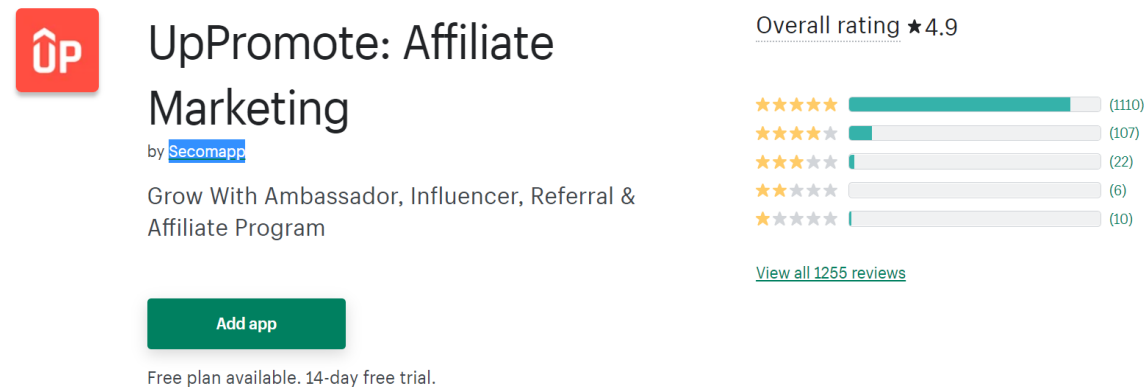**Developer:** Flits

Rating: 4.9/5

Pricing:

1. Basic: $4.99 for upto 1000 customers
2. Business: $9.99 for upto 25000 customers
3. Enterprise: $29.99 for upto 100,000 customers

Key features:

- Primary feature: Customer account page with Profile, Order History, Re-order button, Recently viewed products, Contact- Us button, etc.
- Add-on: Wishlist
- Add-on: Store credit (Reward program along with referral program depending on the billing plan)
- Add-on: Social login
- Add-on: Advanced order history

4.12 UpPromote: Affiliate Marketing

MARKETING | CONVERSION | SOURCING AND SELLING PRODUCTS

UpPromote: Affiliate Marketing
by Secomapp

Grow With Ambassador, Influencer, Referral & Affiliate Program

Add app

Free plan available. 14-day free trial.

Overall rating ★ 4.9

★★★★★	(1110)
★★★★☆	(107)
★★★☆☆	(22)
★★☆☆☆	(6)
★☆☆☆☆	(10)

View all 1255 reviews

Source: Shopify App Store

Affiliate Marketing would like to bring all users an app that helps you build, manage and succeed with your affiliate marketing campaign. Highly recommend UpPromote: Affiliate Marketing as it is.

Developer: Secomapp

Rating: 4.9/5

Pricing: Free plan available
1. The other plans vary from $19.99-$119.99/month:
2. Grow Affiliate $19.99/month
3. Professional Plan $59.99/month
4. Enterprise $119.99/month

Key features:
- Track all referral orders and affiliates' performance automatically and instantly
- Grow your team with UpPromote Marketplace by showcasing brand's program or proactively inviting potential affiliates on Marketplace
- Track, analyze performance seamlessly
- Share marketing media assets with affiliates
- Automatic payout via PayPal
- Integrate with Klaviyo, Mailchimp, Recharge, Bold Subscription, and many more
- Dedicated support team: 24/7 support, FAQs/Forum, Email, Phone, Chat

We all love holidays, don't we? Holidays bring in the time to connect, share and embrace quality moments with our friends and family. Also the sales on almost every product also becomes appealing for spendings. Businesses announce discounted prices for various products. People in a huge number apply for coupons and deals.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way we live, work and enjoy holidays. Retail businesses have suffered while online shopping has grown up. Despite a global pandemic there is only a slight drop in the holiday spendings as consumers are finding ways to bring down the tensed environment that the pandemic has created. With no doubt holidays are the time that we all wait the whole year.

The holidays are quickly approaching, and we all know how important they are for business. Every holiday presents an opportunity to stand out and leave a lasting impression. The most wonderful time of the year can be even better when your business is booming.

This year, in order to help you get well prepared, we have a gift for you. Here is our latest ebook "How to prepare for the booming 2021 Holiday Sales Season".

Conclusion

And there you have it!

Holidays are a time when emotions are high, everyone celebrating is taking time off work to meet and greet with their loved ones. Amidst the current global situation, emotional connection can't be stressed enough!

Preparing a brilliant seasonal sales campaign that caters to customer needs, therefore, can bring you more customers, more feedback and more sales. From attracting more high-intent shoppers to your website to optimizing for mobile shopping, now is the time to start preparing for what could be your busiest holiday season ever.

Hungry to keep learning? Please keep an eye on **https://fireapps.io** for more interesting information.