

simplybiz®

Holiday season sales & marketing playbook

Marketing strategies
to boost your sales
online and in store.



GET
READY

PREPARE YOUR
ONLINE STORE

PREPARE YOUR
PHYSICAL STORE

PROMOTE! PROMOTE!
PROMOTE!



Click these tabs to quickly navigate through this playbook

With this playbook, you can confidently prepare your small business for the holiday season. Remember to set clear goals, manage inventory, create a festive atmosphere, and focus on providing an exceptional customer experience. By following these steps, you'll be well on your way to a successful holiday season for your business. **Good luck!**

30%

Shopify reports that the six weeks from Black Friday to New Year account for 30% of an eCommerce store's annual revenue.



25%

According to Statista, the holiday quarter should account for 25% of total sales in the retail sector.



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Get ready!

Preparation is key.

Questions you should be asking yourself now...

How does the holiday season traditionally impact your industry and your business specifically?

What is the expected number of extra customers?

What is the predicted increase in revenue?

Are your suppliers able to meet the additional demand?

Are you operationally geared up?

In South Africa, it is our main vacation period and possible bonus time, so even when the economy is tight, consumers are more likely to shop for non-essentials than at any other time. It's vital to attract your share of the wallet while it's open!



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R226bn

According to the fifth annual Summer Spending survey, South Africans are expected to spend more than R226bn over the festive season.



35%

Food and beverages will account for over 35% of people's festive season spend.



27%

At 27%, for the first time ever, Gauteng tops the list as the most popular holiday destination largely because people are choosing to have staycations or to travel within their home province due to increased fuel costs.



17%

Transport will make up approximately 17% of festive budgets spend.



2%

Just 2% of South Africans plan to travel overseas this season.

Source: Bizcommunity.co.za



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The number one
digital media channel
for product discovery
for users is now
TikTok.



TikTok

70 billion views

#tiktokmademebuyit – TikTok is a powerful blend of community, entertainment and shopping!

5x

TikTok users are 5x more likely to follow trends on the platform when making purchase decisions during the holiday season compared to normal shopping times.

67%

According to TikTok Marketing Science US Holiday Shopping Behaviour Custom Research, 74% of users around the globe said the platform inspired them to find out more about a brand or a product, while 67% said the platform inspired them to shop, even when they weren't looking to do so.



*Source: TikTok Marketing Science South Africa, Holiday Season Shopping Report 2023, conducted by Redseer

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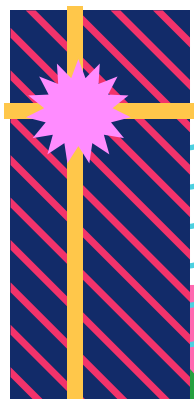
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Prepare your online store for the shopping frenzy

People are letting their fingers
do the shopping... make sure
they find your festive season
promotions quickly and easily.

58%

Wunderman Thompson's
Future Shopper Report
2023 reveals that 58%
of all consumer spending
in South Africa takes
place online.



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Your website is your online storefront and customers form an opinion about your site in 1/20th of a second!



8 sec

8 seconds is the average person's attention span. (Statisticbrain.com)

2 - 10 sec

2 to 10 seconds is all you have before visitors to your site decide to take a closer look or click away. (bloggingbistro.com)

28%

A maximum of 28% of words are read on an average Web page.

53%

53% of mobile users abandon sites that take over 3 seconds to load. (Google Analytics)



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Create a holiday and festive season theme early

Customers visiting your site now will be reminded immediately of the upcoming season and will be on the lookout for promotions. It's easy to do and gives your site a refresh in terms of how it appears

Use announcement bars and popups

These can be automated to pop up and tell your visitors about upcoming sales and promotions. They are also great for advertising flash sales and time-limited offers.

Add festive touches

Customers at stores appreciate gift wrapping services... offer the same online. For example, you can automate pop-up advertising 'Spend RX and get free gift wrapping.' Or offer the option to add a personalised card with the gift.

Offer free shipping

Free shipping is a significant attraction. Consider dropping your minimum purchase value for the festive season (and shouting out about it) or help customers achieve the minimum purchase threshold by pop-ups that tell them how close they are to free delivery.

Advertise your holiday promotions on email and social media

Begin to tell people about your upcoming festive discounts and offers before the holiday season begins. If you have subscribers to a regular newsletter, consider including loyalty discount codes, as a way of both rewarding loyal customers and encouraging purchases. You could also include a special pre-sale-day code so that they can benefit early.

Populate your social media pages with adverts and sneak previews.



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Entice once –off customers to come back

Target non –active customers with emails such as ‘We haven’t seen you for a while’, or ‘Look what Santa has for you’ to remind them of your brand and what you have to offer.

Create gift bundles

A popular method of upselling is to create gift bundles by putting together two or three products at a discount over the total. Everyone loves value for money and this helps you to push slower moving stock by linking it to popular items. These gift bundles should be prominently and attractively displayed on your website.

Produce holiday gift guides

People will be searching for gift ideas for loved ones, colleagues, friends, and family. Help them to help you! Gift guides can be targeted at specific people – the top ten gifts for teachers – or grouped by price range and/or category.

This grouping allows you to showcase a variety of different products and to focus your social media messaging accordingly. For example, a gift shop may wish to promote children’s toys in one advert and gents’ toiletries in another. Each advert would have a different tone and messaging to appeal to the specific target market.



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Optimise product pages

Optimising your promotional product descriptions for search results is best done by writing your own or hiring a writer to provide quality copy. It is tempting to simply cut 'n paste from your suppliers, but product descriptions and tags should align with your festive season campaign.

Reduce the text and use attention-grabbing aids such as high quality videos, images and bullet points.

Ensure that your product images are professional, clear and easy to read. Don't forget the T&Cs!

Target cart abandonment

Consider a targeted email or SMS marketing campaign that automatically targets visitors who have abandoned a cart. It's useful to offer a further incentive to the customer to return and complete the transaction. This may be a discount, a promise of a future discount or free shipping but have something in your arsenal to tackle cart abandonment.

Speed and ease of use

Remember the magic three seconds to load before you lose a customer... Furthermore, customers expect a website that is easy to navigate. This is especially important when we consider that mobile devices are the most popular method of eCommerce transactions. Ensure that your site is mobile-friendly and optimised for SEO.

Use surprise tactics

Flash sales are an excellent method of grabbing the consumer's attention and creating excitement. Post offers such as '50% off for one day only' or use pop-up timers and offers such as, 'Buy one, get one free before the clock stops!' Use this method ad hoc over the holiday period, especially if you see sales are dropping off.



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Prepare your physical shop for the holiday season

The holiday season is a crucial time for small businesses to boost sales and connect with customers. While it can be a hectic period, proper preparation takes the stress away and enables you to capitalise on the opportunities.

77%

Up to 77% of people will be festive shopping at physical stores, as a way of enjoying the festive spirits in malls.
(bizcommunity.co.za)



Clarify what you want to achieve

How do we eat an elephant? One bite at a time... Create specific, measurable, and achievable goals to track your progress.

For example, if your goal is to increase sales by 25% during November and December, then what are the actions required to achieve this? The goal drives your planning.

Stock up!

Review your current inventory and identify slow -moving stock items that you could discount or bundle to clear it.

Stock up on popular or flagship holiday items. Negotiate with suppliers to ensure that you can meet the increased demand generated by your promotions.

Implement a system to track inventory and restock quickly.

Decorate and create a festive atmosphere

Create an inviting holiday ambiance with decorations, lights, and festive music. A beautifully decorated store can put shoppers in the holiday spirit. Use your storefront window to showcase holiday -themed products or tell a story related to your brand. A visually appealing display can attract passersby.

Decorating does not have to cost a fortune. Involve staff and customers in decorating for a season that represents fun and family vacations.

Running competitions for the best children's poster will give you lots of colourful decor and spark excitement. Host workshops where customers can learn to create holiday crafts or decorations.

Ensure that your decorations don't distract from your promotions! They must be front and centre.



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Plan in –store promotions

Your customers expect special holiday discounts and promotions, so give them the best bargains you can and encourage cross –selling with wise placement! Displays should be enticing, and clearly state the offer and the savings involved.

Remember to appeal to all the senses – if you're promoting cookies – have tasters! Perfume – offer to spritz customers as they walk in.

Reward loyal customers with a holiday –themed loyalty programme.

Offer discounts, exclusive deals, or special perks for repeat or large Rand value shoppers.

Partner with a local charity or nonprofit organisation for a holiday giving campaign.

Extend store hours

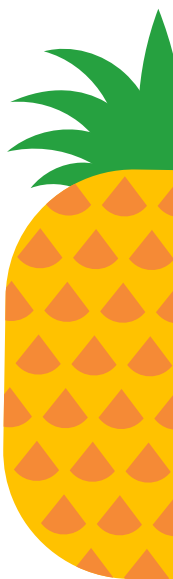
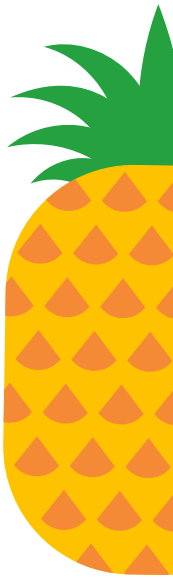
Consider longer operating hours to accommodate holiday shoppers and ensure that you have sufficient staff levels for peak hours.

Train your team

Involve your team in planning your holiday promotions. Emphasise store policies and how to handle customer queries and complaints. Great discounts do not make up for uninterested, unhelpful staff. Hire seasonal help if necessary, queues and delays cause customer dissatisfaction and can undermine all your efforts. Implement a hassle –free return policy and stick to it!

Streamline checkout processes

Once your customer has decided to buy, it's up to you to make it easy for them to pay and be on their way. Set up additional registers or payment options and train employees to handle increased traffic efficiently. Have floor walkers to assist customers with queries and make sure that someone is monitoring queue levels at checkout.



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You've done your planning – you've pre-ordered stock, trained staff and optimised your online shop – now it's time to activate your festive social media marketing campaign. **It's time to be loud and proud!** Your social media pages should be all about your upcoming offers. Tell them about the products, the deals, sneak previews and any special information about shipping. Keep this fresh with new content weekly and remember to mix the product pushes with feel-good notices or helpful tips.



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Know your market

Understand your target audience's preferences, interests, and behaviours during the holiday season. This knowledge will help you create content that resonates with them.

Create a content calendar

Plan your holiday content in advance by creating a content calendar. Determine which holidays or events you want to focus on, such as Black Friday, School's out, Christmas, New Year's Eve, etc.

Create festive branding

Update your social media profiles and cover photos with holiday -themed visuals. Use festive colours, logos, and banners to create a holiday look that's consistent with your brand.

Use holiday -specific hashtags

Research and use trending holiday/festive season hashtags relevant to your business and industry to increase your content's visibility.

Promotions and giveaways

Offer exclusive holiday -themed promotions, discounts and giveaways to reward your loyal followers. Make sure to promote these offers effectively on your social channels.

Offer attractive discounts

There is extreme competition out there. Offer a truly attractive sale price or bundle if you want your business to be seen and heard amongst the noise. Make sure your discount offers are displayed prominently on all pages.

Use visuals

Share high -quality visuals, especially videos, of your holiday - themed products, services, or decorations.

Schedule posts

Use social media management tools to schedule your holiday content in advance. This ensures a consistent posting schedule, even if you're busy during the holiday rush.



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Track analytics

Monitor the performance of your holiday posts using social media analytics. Pay attention to metrics like engagement, reach, click-through and conversion rates.

Adjust and adapt

Based on your analytics, make adjustments to your strategy as needed. If certain types of content are performing exceptionally well, create more of that content.

Holiday countdown

Create excitement by counting down to important holiday dates. Share daily tips, facts, or deals as part of your countdown.

Post-holiday engagement

Continue engaging with your audience after the holidays by sharing content like thank-you messages, year-end reviews and resolutions for the new year.



By following these steps and staying consistent with your holiday-themed social media strategy, you can effectively connect with your audience and increase holiday sales.

Content ideas

Keep your content fresh and interesting by offering variety:

- Gift guides for different target audiences.
- Behind-the-scenes content showing your holiday preparations, e.g. your team dressed in elves costumes.
- Encourage user-generated content (UGC) by running competitions and spot prizes where you ask customers to share photos and experiences with your products or services. Repost and share UGC with your audience, giving credit to the creators.
- Generate holiday-themed quizzes, polls and surveys.
- Spread goodwill and share inspirational and heartwarming stories.
- Reach out to your community and become involved with relevant charities.
- Encourage engagement by responding promptly to comments, questions and messages.

Rest, recharge and reward

Take care of yourself and your employees. Acknowledge hard work and initiative immediately and publicly. Celebrate your team's achievements and consider how to reward their efforts in a way that is meaningful to them. For instance, if staff are working late, offer assistance with safe transportation. They too have families they want to celebrate with.



SimplyBiz holiday season sales and marketing playbook

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