

The ultimate seasonal calendar to help plan for the year ahead

Now more than ever, it's important for retailers to have a roadmap for the future. The coronavirus pandemic has presented unique challenges to retailers — altering consumer expectations, habits, and purchasing behaviour dramatically.

From Valentine's Day, right up to the holiday season, this handy infographic uses the latest consumer trends, industry insights, and digital best practices to lay out the year's key seasonal moments. Use this calendar to guide your approach, prioritise your next steps, and create a marketing strategy that meets your evolving business needs.

Valentine's Day

Types of retailers
Gift and greetings, florists, fashion and apparel, as well as personalisation services.

Consumer insights
In the UAE, 95% of shoppers research products online before buying and 41% buy online due to the convenience of home delivery.¹

Audiences
Reach customers who are celebrating Valentine's Day and are actively shopping during this moment, which you can do through in-market audiences. This covers gifts and occasions categories — from flowers and chocolates to jewellery.

Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day has become one of the biggest opportunities of the year for digital retailers, with queries like 'same day delivery' and 'romantic restaurants' showing massive growth.

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Mother's Day

Online shopping makes it easy to find a truly unique gift for Mother's Day. Make sure you're up to date with the search terms that customers are using to find one-of-a-kind gifts.

Types of retailers
Home and garden, gift and greeting, florists, and fashion and apparel.

Consumer insights
The current situation has shifted many people to online shopping, with 26% of UAE consumers expecting to shop more online for non-groceries even after this period.² Ensure your site is optimised for a positive e-commerce experience.

Audiences
Be sure to cover a range of in-market audience categories to promote your products to shoppers who are looking to buy. This can be achieved using categories such as Mother's Day shopping, flowers, and greeting cards. Combine this with remarketing to re-engage with customers who are likely to convert.

Mother's Day

In 2020, searches in the UAE for 'Mother's Day' reached an all-time high, up 43% on the previous year, and started to rise a week ahead of the day.³

In 2020, searches related to 'Mother's Day gifts' grew by 25% when compared to the previous year.⁴

Ramadan

Ramadan is a time to celebrate togetherness and community values. Muslims fast during this period and spend a lot of time with family and friends. Preparations for Eid begin weeks in advance, with consumers browsing and buying gifts for loved ones.

Types of retailers
Beauty, fashion and apparel, food and grocery, and gift and greeting.

Consumer insights
In 2019, 53% of consumers noted that they increased their spending during the Holy Month.⁵ 49% mentioned that they were likely to increase their usage of online shopping apps during Ramadan.⁶

Audiences
During Ramadan, people are looking to celebrate and purchase gifts for family and friends, cook delicious meals for loved ones, and dress up and look their best for Eid. Affinity audiences, such as foodies and gifters, can tap into the full potential of this moment.

Ramadan

Beauty, fashion and apparel, food and grocery, and gift and greeting.

In 2019, 53% of consumers noted that they increased their spending during the Holy Month.⁵ 49% mentioned that they were likely to increase their usage of online shopping apps during Ramadan.⁶

April - May

In 2020, Ramadan-related searches started to rise up to 4 weeks prior to the Holy Month and continued until one week after.⁷

Consumers go through four phases during this period — the preparation phase for the Holy Month, the excitement phase in the first two weeks, the Eid preparation phase during the last two weeks, and finally Eid itself.⁸

Ramadan

Beauty, fashion and apparel, food and grocery, and gift and greeting.

In 2019, 53% of consumers noted that they increased their spending during the Holy Month.⁵ 49% mentioned that they were likely to increase their usage of online shopping apps during Ramadan.⁶

Father's Day

From barbecues to clothing, gift searches for dads are wide-ranging. Dads can be tough to buy for, so maybe think outside the box.

Types of retailers
Gift and greetings, fashion and apparel, home and garden, and consumer electronics.

Consumer insights
With an increasing amount of time spent at home, people are turning to YouTube to learn new skills. Global watch time of how-to videos that include 'for beginners' or 'step by step' in the title saw a 65% increase in watch time year-on-year.⁹ Consider creating video content to re-engage with consumers and showcase your products in action as they look for new ways to entertain themselves.

Audiences
Information on consumer interests helps you expand your advertising into relevant markets. For moments like Father's Day, which are family-centric, affinity categories such as family-focused or lifestyle and hobbies can reach those who are interested in your products.

Father's Day

On YouTube, searches for 'Father's Day' have grown 100% YoY including trends around Father's Day songs.¹⁰

Searches for 'Father's Day gift' have grown 24% YoY, and start as early as 6 weeks before the actual holiday.¹¹

In 2019, searches for 'Father's Day card' were up 37% from 2018 and started to increase from the last week of April.¹²

June - August

During the summer of 2019, searches related to 'online sales' grew by over 300% in the UAE.¹³

During the summer of 2019, there was a 90% growth in searches for 'sports clothes' in UAE, Egypt & KSA during the summer.¹⁴

Summer Sales

We're making the most of our gardens now more than ever, so searches for keeping the garden glorious are at a high. Sales are up too, with many shoppers seeking bargains online.

Types of retailers
Home and garden, fashion and apparel, and sporting goods.

Consumer insight
People accept that holidaying abroad will probably not be a viable option this summer, instead they're looking for ways to enjoy summer from home. Searches mentioning 'staycation' grew by over 200% during the month of May alone.¹⁵ Also, searches for 'home DIY' peaked during the first week of May 2020, up 203% since the beginning of the year.¹⁶ Stay up-to-date with the latest Google Search trends on what people are looking for this summer.

Audiences
For summer sales, go for a mix of audience strategies, from activating key audiences such as bargain hunters, to those searching for the trending categories at this time of year. This includes home and garden, outdoor items, sports and fitness, and outdoor recreational equipment.

Back to School

Getting back to school is a busy time for kids and parents alike, with new books, clothes, stationery, and technology high on most shoppers' lists.

Types of retailers
Consumer electronics, fashion and apparel, stationary, and educational services.

Consumer insights
It's still unclear how schools will operate in the near future. This year, search interest for 'distance learning' increased by 108% during March alone.¹⁷ It's important to be flexible and anticipate a change in back-to-school shopping habits.

Audiences
Back to school is one of the busiest retail moments of the year. Connect with those actively shopping for related items through in-market categories like computer and hardware, as well as apparel and accessories. Use detailed demographics to engage with key audiences such as parents, teachers, and students.

Back to School

In 2019, back to school searches on YouTube were up 49% from 2018, and peaked during the last week of August.¹⁸

This year, searches related to 'school' started even earlier as parents plan in advance, with queries growing by 52% since the last week of May 2020.¹⁹

November

Search interest related to 'Single's Day' grew by 187% year-on-year in the UAE.²⁰

During the week of Single's Day in 2019, search interest related to 'discount' grew by 55% when compared to the previous year.²¹

Single's Day

Single's Day is an increasingly significant moment around the world. This 24-hour shopping extravaganza originated in China as a way for single people to indulge and buy themselves gifts at a reduced price. In 2019, Alibaba's Single's Day sales surpassed \$38 billion in just 24 hours.²¹

Types of retailers
Fashion and apparel, beauty, and home and garden.

Consumer insights
In the UAE, staying home has led to more time being spent on mobile, with 50% of consumers anticipating their use of social media to increase.²² In addition more than 90% of Single's Day purchases last year were made on mobile devices, so it's important to optimise your campaigns for mobile.

Audiences
To align with relevant themes like self-care and treating yourself, focus on in-market categories like shoppers and luxury shoppers.

Black Friday

Black Friday is a great opportunity to build brand awareness in the months before the peak holiday season, while also testing new tactics and growth opportunities. Get an early start, and set your campaigns up for success this holiday season.

Types of retailers
Consumer electronics, fashion and apparel, and educational services.

Consumer insights
In 2019, people in the UAE were preparing for the sales, with queries for 'when is Black Friday' up 46% from 2018. Searches for 'Black Friday deals' were also up 24%, and started to rise three weeks before the moment.²³

Audiences
Combine multiple audience strategies to make the most of Black Friday. Reach certain demographics like technology enthusiasts and bargain hunters, while also creating a remarketing list of previous visitors, and optimise your shopping bids to re-engage your most valuable customers.

Black Friday

In 2019, 61% of MENA shoppers said that they use Google Search specifically to research online during Black Friday.²⁴

Searches related to 'promo code' peaked the most during the week of Black Friday in 2019, when compared to the entire year.²⁵

December

In 2019, 83% planned to do their holiday shopping on a mobile app.²⁶

Searches related to 'gift' peaked the most during the third week of December in 2018 and 2019.²⁷

Holiday Season

The holiday shopping season is the busiest moment of the year for most retailers. Any long-term changes in this behaviour are hard to predict, but the move to digital is assured.

Types of retailers
Fashion and apparel, toys and games, and beauty.

Consumer insights
Last year, 76% of UAE shoppers planned to increase their holiday purchases online.²⁸ Given the shift to online we have witnessed this year, be prepared for online purchases to grow even further this holiday season.

Audiences
Apply seasonal event audience strategies to reach those in key categories such as gift and occasion, holiday and seasonal, and after-Christmas sales.

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