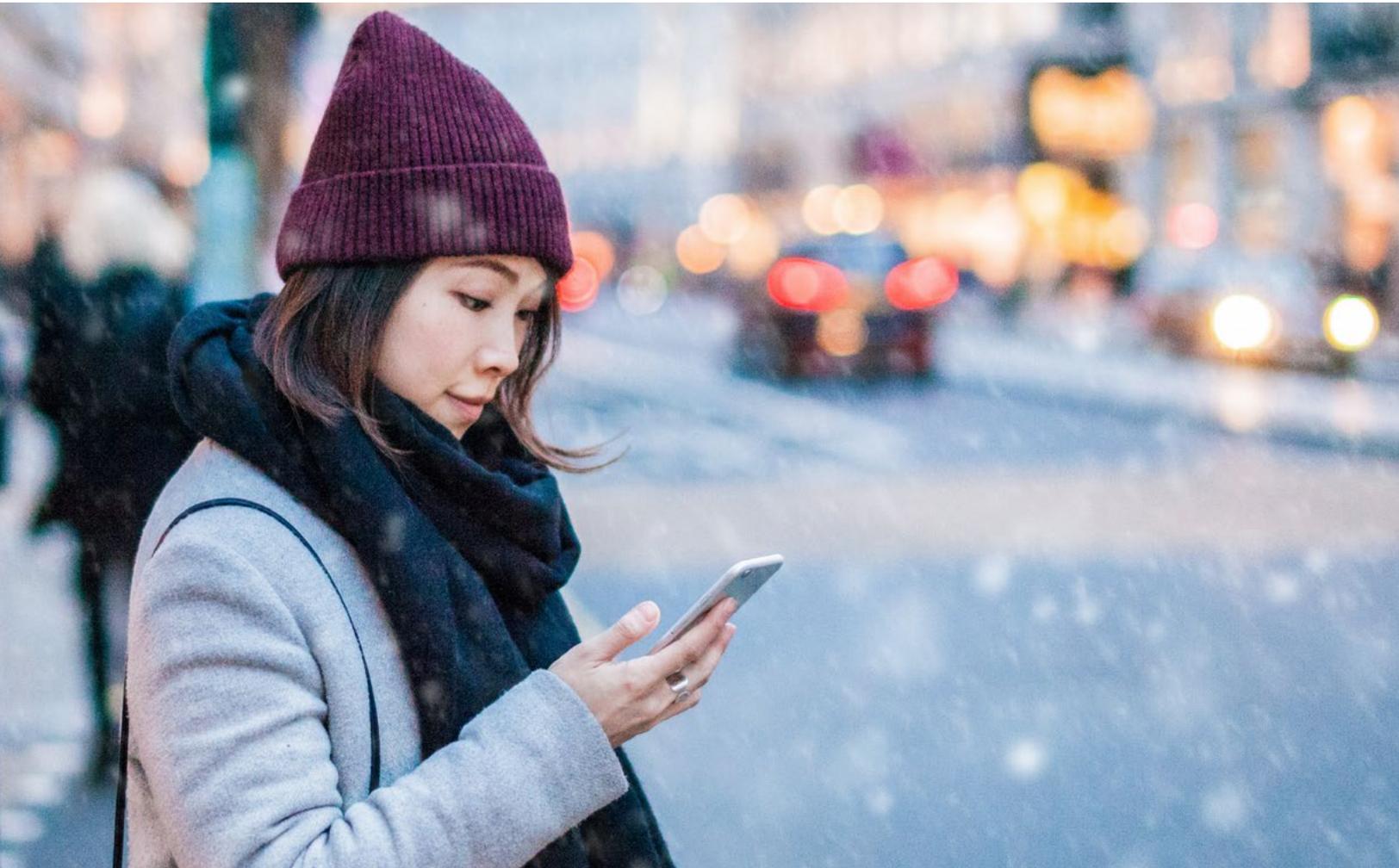


WPROMOTE

# Advance Planning: The Key to 2019 Holiday Success

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Consumer expectations around every facet of the purchase journey have skyrocketed, and these expectations are even more pronounced during the holiday season when competition is fiercer. Your customers are most likely already shopping around for the best deal or the fastest free shipping.

Further, with the ubiquity of mobile, consumers are relying on online platforms more than ever to discover new products, conduct research on them, and make purchases. In fact, 2018 featured the strongest growth of e-commerce sales in over a decade,<sup>1</sup> with the majority of online purchases being made via mobile,<sup>2</sup> and in the 2019 holiday season, mobile is expected to be even more of a catalyst for retail growth.

The pressure is on for retailers to make shopping seamless. With six fewer shopping days than last year,<sup>3</sup> planning a robust holiday strategy across devices, platforms, and channels will be key. At the same time, the holiday season brings huge opportunities for brands to smash goals and hit their business objectives.

In this guide, you'll find strategies and tactics to start planning early for how you'll invest your brand's time, resources, and budget into holiday campaigns on [Google Ads](#), from prospecting customers to developing creative, so that you will be fully prepared to achieve a successful 2019 holiday season.

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**\$853B**

in retail in 2018; e-commerce sales reached their strongest growth in over a decade (+18.4% YoY).<sup>1</sup>

**53%**

of shopper-reported purchases were made online.<sup>2</sup>

**56%**

of consumers' time spent shopping was online.<sup>4</sup>

## Automate—Strategically!

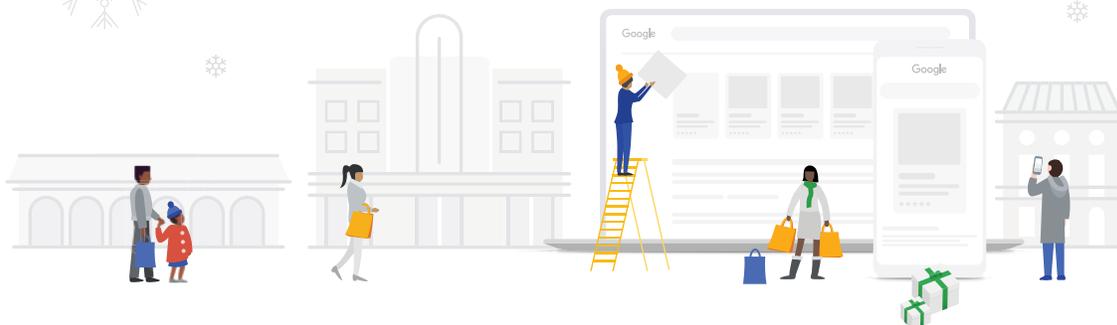
Make data the foundation of everything you do, and use automation alongside a sound audience strategy. If you haven't already, test automated bidding strategies now to improve efficiency in every auction, and leverage smart creative to show the most impactful message to each individual consumer.

Shoppers are now looking for deals well before Black Friday, so it's important to have a full November strategy rather than one that focuses solely on the period between Thanksgiving and Christmas. During peak season, you can boost product visibility to your most likely customers—rather than *all* searchers—with automated solutions like [Smart Shopping](#) campaigns and [Target ROAS bidding](#), which will adjust for seasonality during peak days.

Focus on building audience lists early, and deploy these audiences to strategically nurture new customers through the funnel, along with recapturing past site visitors and existing customers. Creating and testing audience lists early to discover high-converting audience segments will give you valuable insights further into the holiday season to re-engage select customers during peak shopping periods. Prospect early in the season to drive conversions among early shoppers and to build remarketing pools before you launch peak season sales.

**37%** of holiday shopping was completed before Black Friday 2018.<sup>5</sup>

**72%** of retail marketing execs believe their functional KPIs can be better achieved with greater investment in automation and machine learning.<sup>6</sup>



## Case Study: Zenni Optical



Throughout 2019, the Zenni Optical team has conducted multiple tests to figure out new areas of growth, ultimately expanding into [Google Discovery ads](#). The team put together detailed promotion support plans for Black Friday and Cyber Monday in early Q3, alongside investment planning to support sales and ensure the account is fully funded during the strongest periods.

## Make It Personal

Once you know who your customers are, connect with them in a meaningful way at each point during consideration. From discovering your brand to making the final purchase, the customer journey should be frictionless. A few tactics to consider:

- **Create personalized offers and promotions** based on customers' purchase history, and layer different offers and creative to attract users at various stages. Leverage promotion extensions and [Merchant Promotions](#) to highlight special offers.
- **Add seasonally relevant keywords, and test your messaging** by deploying specific messaging by keyword and keyword theme. Also, modify your copy and call to action depending on whether the customer is new or returning, as well as which stage of the funnel they're in.
- **Use dynamic search ads** to capture new queries with automated headlines containing that query.
- **Tap audiences similar to your most loyal customers to grow your business** with new, high-potential consumers.
- **Reconnect with interested shoppers and lapsed customers** using remarketing lists across your campaigns, and re-engage your existing customers using your own first-party data with [Customer Match](#). Dynamic remarketing ads and triggered emails (e.g., "You left this in your cart" messages) help remind customers of items that caught their interest. You can also encourage customers to build larger baskets and increase purchase volume by promoting complementary products, as well as offering bundles and special gifts.



59%

of consumers expect shipping and billing information to be remembered.<sup>7</sup>

58%

of consumers want promotions based on purchase history.<sup>8</sup>

## Case Study: The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf®



This year, the Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf® team has been testing automated [Local campaigns](#) to drive foot traffic to The Coffee Bean store locations throughout Southern California. Given the campaigns' initial success, the company is planning to continue using Local campaigns to drive shoppers to stores during the busy holiday season. Holiday campaigns will leverage top-performing creative, as well as seasonal products and promotional offers that Guests are looking for at this time of year.

## Activate Every Channel

Omnichannel is always the right approach. Coordinate your holiday campaign mix across channels, including in-store, to create a seamless experience that aligns the feel of your site, social channels, and in-store experience.

- **Website:** Take advantage of Google's [Shopping Actions](#), which allows online shoppers to see and buy goods from you on Google platforms. Shopping Actions also features a shareable list, universal shopping cart, and instant checkout with saved payment credentials. Elsewhere on your site, best practices include using autofill forms, avoiding interstitials, and placing the product's price and "Add to cart" button above the fold.
- **Video:** Use video to inspire, educate, and engage shoppers. Upload videos of store tours, product demos, and seasonal gift recommendations. Use [TrueView for shopping](#) campaigns on YouTube to connect viewers directly with your products.
- **Mobile:** Build mobile from the ground up, and optimize with images customized for mobile and mobile-specific UI/UX rather than simply repurposing your desktop website. You can also reduce your mobile load time using tips from [Test My Site](#).
- **In-store:** 51% of US shoppers currently buy online and pick up in store.<sup>9</sup> Use your online experience to encourage shoppers to visit in person: include stock info for nearby stores, offer the "buy online, pick up in store" option to reduce shipping costs and give shoppers a more immediate way to get products, and provide coupon downloads for in-store redemption.
- **Payments:** Use [Google Pay](#) for easy checkout. You can also offer financing options and expedited shipping, and sweeten the deal by offering a gift with purchase or other incentives to buy.

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**68%**

of shoppers acquired through Shopping Actions are net new to merchants.<sup>10</sup>

**61%**

of online purchases were made via mobile, +27% YoY.<sup>11</sup>

**60%**

of consumers shopped via a mobile app.<sup>12</sup>

**68%**

of online purchases in the week leading up to Black Friday/Cyber Monday were made on a smartphone (up from 51% in 2017).<sup>13</sup>

**46%**

of holiday shoppers used their smartphone to shop while in store (up from 44% in 2017).<sup>14</sup>

## Case Study: Lulus



In 2019, Lulus conducted a series of incremental tests to prove the additional value that YouTube ads drive. Since the team didn't have to pay to reach consumers who would have purchased anyway without the YouTube touchpoint, they were able to best plan holiday investments, resulting in a greater revenue and profit impact.

Strategize now for a strong 2019 holiday season. Consumers have come to expect a stellar experience at every stage of the purchase journey. They want their preferences, like shipping address and previous billing information, to be remembered. They desire more personalized offers and promotions based on their purchase history—and they're looking to you, as a brand, for inspiration. Plan, prepare, and take an omnichannel approach in order to provide experiences that meet consumers' expectations in all the places they are.

Ready to smash through your Q4 goals? Contact [Wpromote](#) today, and we'll guide you through holiday digital strategies and more!

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## About Wpromote



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Wpromote turns challengers into champions as your premier partner for rapid growth. Challenging the status quo drives us to deliver dramatic results and grow market share for our clients. We become experts in your business and develop an integrated approach tailored to your needs. From paid search to SEO, social to email, our talented team of 425+ manages campaigns for companies such as Frontier Airlines, Samsung, BevMo, Proactiv, and Zenni Optical. Join us and get ready to think like a challenger!

### Stats:

**425+** employees across  
8 offices nationwide

**3x** winner of *Ad Age's*  
Best Places to Work

**#1** Ranked Performance  
Marketing Agency:  
Forrester Wave