



ROASTERTOOLS

THE COFFEE ROASTER'S GUIDE TO PROFITABLE HOLIDAYS:

5 STRATEGIES FOR INCREASED SALES





The Coffee Roaster's Guide to Profitable Holidays

5 Strategies for Increased Sales

The holidays are a pivotal time of year for coffee roasters. They're a season filled with deadlines, urgency, and—if all goes according to plan—a substantial increase in sales. After all, coffee is a highly consumable and beloved gift especially for those who already have a lot of tangible “things.”

If you're not cautious, the holidays can also be a season of shrinking margins. Rising costs, increased labor expenses, and those pesky rush fees on last-minute inventory all threaten to diminish your coffee roasting company's profitability.

Don't worry, we're here to make sure that doesn't happen!

In this guide, we're sharing five proven strategies for increased sales and profitability you can use this holiday season.

Once you've finished reading, you'll know:

- 🔥 How to create a holiday blend that excites your customers (and your bottom line!)
- 🔥 Why increasing end-of-year sales with wholesale accounts can substantially add to your revenue
- 🔥 How upselling, cross-selling, and product bundles are key to successful holiday promotions

With our strategies in your back pocket, you'll be ready to gear up for a joyous and profitable holiday season!



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1. Creating and Marketing Your Holiday Coffee Blend

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Coffee blends are a roaster's bread and butter. These tasty coffee products provide customers with the consistency and flavors they crave while maintaining the profit margins and product loyalty coffee roasters need to grow their business.

During the holiday season, roasters can capitalize on the popularity of blends by selling a limited-time "Holiday Blend." As we all know, however, creating a coffee blend is easier said than done!

Follow these steps to develop a blend that captivates customers' palates and meets your business goals for the holiday season:



Pick a Flavor Goal

Holiday blends should incite that "warm and fuzzy" feeling we all associate with the holidays. This means the natural flavors of your blend need to be inspired by the holiday season.

Perhaps you want your holiday blend to elicit warm spice notes with a deep dessert-like finish. Maybe the tasting notes of your blend are reminiscent of your Grandmother's special holiday dessert. Or, you can create a blend that tastes like the first hot chocolate after a snow day!

It's completely up to you!

Every great blend starts by defining your flavor goals. **Assigning a desired flavor profile will guide your coffee sourcing, roasting, and blending decisions moving forward.**

Get a Handle on Green Coffee Inventory

Once you know what your holiday blend should taste like, take a look at your existing green coffee inventory.

Do you have green coffee on hand that can accomplish this flavor profile? If so, do you have enough coffee in your warehouse or on contract?

Or, will you need to source, sample, and contract other green coffees to achieve your desired flavor? If so, is there enough time left before the holiday season to feasibly accomplish this?

For those starting this process close to the peak holiday season, we recommend working with the green coffee inventory you have on hand. Not only does this avoid additional sourcing expenses, but it also allows you to add a layer of "exclusivity" to your blend by only offering a specific quantity. Once it's gone, it's gone!

On the other hand, if you're starting the holiday planning process early in the year, you have the benefit of spending time sourcing and sampling coffees that meet both your flavor profile and profitability goals.

It's in your best interest to determine your inventory needs well in advance of the holidays, ideally around September or early October.

Blend Away

Now that your green coffee needs are sorted, blend away!

Experiment with different coffee and roast combinations until you unlock the perfect holiday blend recipe. At the end of the day, you know your customers and your business goals best. Create the blend you think will resonate most with your loyal customers!



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1. Creating and Marketing Your Holiday Coffee Blend

Design Packaging and Labels

The holidays provide an opportunity to leverage themed packaging and make your seasonal blends stand out on the shelf.

Of course, costs are always a concern when designing and printing new packaging elements. A few ways to keep packaging costs low include:

- **Use labels only** — Some roasters opt to use a single, standard bag design with rotating labels. This is a great way to keep costs manageable while differentiating each product on the shelf. Design a holiday blend label that catches the customers' eye!
- **Take advantage of low MOQs** — Certain bag manufacturers like Roastar allow coffee businesses to design and print bags with low minimum order quantities. This option is great for roasters who plan to sell the holiday blend in-store, online, and to wholesale accounts.

The beauty of coffee blends is that once it's created, promoted, and sold during the first holiday season, customers will come back year after year just for that blend. So, your holiday design and packaging therefore becomes an investment in your roastery's future holiday revenue. If you choose to order custom designed bags, those that don't get used this year will be on hand and ready to go next holiday season!

Keep in mind that print, shipping, and delivery times can be lagging during the holiday season. Do yourself a favor and get this done as early as possible to avoid any shipping delays.

Create a Promotional Plan

During the chaos of the holiday season, you can't put a new blend on the shelf and hope for the best. You need a promotional strategy to drive significant sales.

The ins and outs of a promotional campaign will differ from roaster to roaster, but the basics should include:

- **Blend pricing** — How much will you sell this blend for? Pricing your coffee products doesn't need a complex equation, but it does deserve serious thought. Be sure to also determine any pricing discounts you may want to offer as it gets closer to the end of the holiday season.
- **Product Distribution** — Where do you plan to sell this blend? Is it a roastery exclusive or will you also offer ecommerce sales and wholesale distribution? Defining distribution channels will help you tailor campaign assets and strategies accordingly.

- **Visual assets** — Take photos and videos of the blend for use on your website, in-store signage, social media, and email newsletter. You don't need to be a professional photographer either. There are plenty of tools and apps right on your phone!

- **Campaign distribution** — Tell your customers about the holiday blend! Post on social media, share the announcement in an email newsletter, and add a promotional banner to your website. There are so many ways to get the word out!

Overall, use the weeks leading up to the holidays to create, roast, package, and develop a promotional strategy for your holiday blend. That way you'll be ready to sell as much as possible when the holidays arrive!

PRO TIP

To avoid holiday season stress, do your best to have the blend created, inventory managed, and packaging designed and delivered by the beginning of November. This provides ample time for promotion!





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2. Unlocking the Potential of Holiday Gift Bundles

Unlocking the Potential of Holiday Gift Bundles

If you only sell bags of coffee during the holiday season, you're missing out on an easy way to boost sales: **holiday gift bundles.**

Pairing bags of coffee with mugs, apparel, at-home brewing equipment, and other relevant items like chocolate-covered coffee beans is a quick and straightforward way to increase your average order value.

These holiday gifts also leverage the magic of the "bundling" pricing strategy. Instead of buying each item individually, customers can "bundle" the products for a lower total price.

Which of these situations sounds like the easier sell?

- A. Purchasing a bag of coffee (\$15), a ceramic mug (\$10), and a T-shirt (\$20) for \$45
- B. Purchasing a gift basket with a bag of coffee, a ceramic mug, and a T-shirt for \$40

You guessed it. Most customers will opt for choice B.

The built-in discount is a surefire motivation for customers to purchase the bundle. But don't discount too much. Remember, you have to keep the cost of gift packaging in mind.

The real benefit of gift bundles is that it simplifies the purchase process for the customer! No more mulling over possible gift items, one bundle has everything they want. Your customers are busy and you're making their holiday shopping that much easier by offering a gift bundle.

You can also offer gift wrapping as an additional charge for those who order a bundle online. When the bundle arrives, it'll already be wrapped and ready to give to those they love.

eCommerce Holiday Bundles

Don't limit your holiday bundling capabilities to in-store purchases. Add gift bundles to your online store, too!

There are a few ways to approach this:

- ❖ **Designated gift set product listings** — Create and add gift sets as individual products on your online store. For example, a "Holiday Gift Box" would be one eCommerce product and include pre-selected items such as a bag of coffee, mug, and hand grinder.
- ❖ **Automatic bundles** — With this option, bundle pricing is automatically applied to a shopper's cart when they purchase a certain amount or selection of items from your online store, such as a bag of coffee and a mug.
- ❖ **Custom-created bundles** — If your eCommerce store can do so, let customers create individualized holiday gift bundles. Choose a selection of coffees, drinkware, merchandise, and other items for customers to mix and

match into the perfect holiday gift. Your website will automatically adjust pricing based on the items selected.

- ❖ **Give the gift of a coffee subscription** — Coffee subscriptions are the gifts that keep on giving... and giving... and giving! Include a bag of the holiday blend for the subscription's first month and offer subscription frequencies in 3, 6, or 12-month increments.

Holiday bundles are a powerful way to increase sales (and profitability) during the winter months with little effort. You're already stocking the products, so make it even easier for customers to decide and create holiday gift bundles!

PRO TIP

Create different gift sets for customers to choose from. One set can be exclusively holiday themed and include your seasonal blend. Another bundle can be tailored to the home barista, filled with a single origin coffee and pour over equipment. The bundling possibilities are endless!





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3. Increase Orders with Existing Wholesale Accounts

Increase Orders with Existing Wholesale Accounts

During the holidays, you'll notice an increase in order volume from your café and restaurant wholesale accounts, but the boost from retail, grocery, and hospitality accounts may not be as substantial. That is unless you incentivize them to order more!

Try these tactics to grow wholesale orders during the holidays:

- ❖ **Offer your holiday blend to wholesale customers** — Suggest that your coffee shop partners add your holiday blend to their menu. This guarantees additional sales on top of their regular order volume. The same principle applies to any retail or grocery clients you may have.
- ❖ **Leverage bulk discounts** — Run a special holiday promotion that offers wholesale accounts a discount if their order reaches a specific volume threshold. Or, you can apply a volume-based discount to specific products like the holiday blend.
- ❖ **Sell pre-made gift baskets** — Selling pre-made gift baskets to your wholesale accounts gives them another holiday gift item to add to their shelves. You'll extend your brand awareness and generate additional sales at the same time.

- ❖ **Collaborate on marketing efforts** — Work with select wholesale partners to collaborate on promotional efforts during the holidays. You can co-host a holiday market, add their products to your gift bundles (and vice versa), or create a fun holiday campaign together.
- ❖ **Offer complimentary products** — If your wholesale program also sells paper products, supplementary products like syrups, or other bar supplies, run a promotion that includes a free "gift" with a certain order volume or price. For example, if a customer orders 100 lbs of coffee during the promotional period, they'll receive two free bottles of vanilla syrup.

Don't expect wholesale partners to order more coffee solely because it's the holiday season. It's your responsibility to communicate with your wholesale partners and see how you can ensure a constant coffee supply during the busy winter months. Holiday wholesale promotions not only grow your order volume, but also help out your partners during a chaotic time of year!

PRO TIP

And, don't forget to send your partners a holiday gift or card too. A little appreciation goes a long way!





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4. Corporate/Company Gifts Can Go a Long Way

Corporate/Company Gifts Can Go a Long Way

Some companies choose to give their employees a holiday gift each year, and who doesn't love the gift of coffee? It's small, affordable, consumable—and a great way for roasters to generate revenue during the holidays.

Even better, it's another avenue for selling holiday gift baskets!

The goal is to make it easy for offices to give the gift of your coffee (or tea for non-coffee drinkers) to employees this holiday season. This starts by creating a one-pager that has all the details they'll need to decide to buy your coffee gift baskets as gifts. This includes:

- ❖ **Product tiers** — Break down your offerings into different tiers based on price points, order volume, gift basket sizing, and delivery type.
- ❖ **Order deadlines** — You can't have an office of 200 people placing a coffee order on December 23rd! Set deadlines for office orders to ensure a designated delivery date and be sure they are displayed clearly on your promotional materials.
- ❖ **Delivery details** — Make sure offices know how they'll get their coffee delivered. Will you bring the gift baskets to the office? Can you individually ship gifts to employees with a handwritten note from the roastery? Include all the delivery information your customers need to know!

First, connect with any existing wholesale office accounts you may have. Since you already have a connection with these offices, pitching your products is an easy sell! You can also inquire with your grocery, coffee shop, and other retail accounts about holiday gifts as well. Why not? Everyone loves getting coffee during the holidays!

Reach out to corporations and mid to large-sized companies in your local area and inquire about their holiday gift-giving plans. This is your chance to pitch your products and gain a new wholesale account.

Do your best to find companies with a large number of employees. This opens the door for offering bulk volume discounts and helps solidify the sale!

The trick is to do your company outreach early in the fall. Larger companies with a significant amount of employees start planning their holiday gifts as early as September. Plus, many large companies leave the gift decisions up to department managers. Leverage your personal and professional network to offer coffee gift baskets to managers you know!

PRO TIP

The goal is to make it easy for offices to give the gift of your coffee (or tea for non-coffee drinkers) to employees this holiday season.





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5. Creating Attractive Holiday Promotions

Creating Attractive Holiday Promotions

It's not enough to develop a seasonal coffee blend, add a few more wholesale orders, and call it a holiday. If you want to seriously improve sales this holiday season, you need to be on your promotional A-game.

And we don't mean a few extra social media posts and a one-time email blast. We're talking about strategic promotional tactics designed to incentivize high-value purchases and encourage ongoing sales.

Here are a few of our favorite holiday promotional tactics:

Loyalty Programs

Loyalty programs are a fantastic way to reward frequent customers for their ongoing support.

If you already have a loyalty program in place, add a holiday reward for customers who hit a certain number of visits or a specific amount of dollars spent. You can also offer small holiday gifts for those who sign up for your loyalty program during the holidays. *Free peppermint latte anyone?!*

Find creative ways to reward loyal customers beyond points and discounts, too. Perhaps they get first dibs on your seasonal coffee blend every year or special discounts on select holidays!

The goal is to create incentives that keep customers coming back for more well beyond the holiday season.

Pricing Promotions

Who doesn't love a deal during the holiday season? Beyond pricing your products appropriately, there are several ways to run a pricing promotion at your roastery while remaining profitable:

- 🔥 **Limited-time offers** — The trick to a limited-time offer is to ensure that it's truly an exclusive deal. This means there needs to be a definitive start and end date. Look at historical sales data to identify which weeks are slow during the holidays and schedule these offers within that time frame.
- 🔥 **Buy Two, Get One ½ Off** — Volume discounts help move products on the shelf. And, for products where you already have a great margin, everyone loves getting a small gift for free! Use this tactic for products you control the cost of, like coffee blends or café drinks.
- 🔥 **Enter to Win:** Run a holiday contest where all purchases on a certain day are entered to win a gift basket. This approach lets you generate sales, promote your gift basket products, and give back to your customers all at the same time. You can do this in your cafes and online.
- 🔥 **Free Gift With Purchase** — On higher priced items like a rare single origin coffee or a home espresso machine, offer customers a gift when they purchase that item. The gift should be relative to the price of the initial item. For example, if you want customers to buy a high-priced retail item like an espresso machine, a gift could be a set of espresso cups or a milk pitcher. A free sticker won't incentivize people to buy an expensive espresso machine!



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5. Creating Attractive Holiday Promotions

- Free Shipping / Delivery** — Don't forget about pricing promotions on your online store! No one likes paying for shipping during the holidays, so offer it for free when customers hit a specific volume or order value in their cart. Be sure to crunch some numbers first to know how much a customer should spend before free shipping is justified!

The key to pricing promotions is to do the math first... not after the promotion has finished.

Run a few calculations to see if giving away a free bag of coffee with the purchase of two is worth it. In some cases, it is! In others, it ends up costing you way more than you make back. Do your due diligence before running a pricing promotion this holiday season.

PRO TIP

Encourage employees to suggest relevant products, recommend new coffee products, and engage in conversations that allow them to learn more about the customers.



Upselling & Cross-Selling

A little suggestion can go a long way in sales.

Upselling is the tactic of increasing the value of a total sale, typically focusing on a single product. Upselling can include suggesting a customer purchase a two-pound bag of coffee instead of the 12-ounce bag to accommodate the influx of holiday gifts.

Cross-selling refers to the process of encouraging customers to increase the number of products purchased. A great example of cross-selling is recommending a customer also purchase a coffee grinder or mug to go along with their bag of whole bean coffee. Don't forget to remind people to purchase your decaf blends for after-dinner holiday cocktails!

Both upselling and cross-selling have the potential to dramatically increase a sale's value if executed well. On top of promotional discounts and pricing strategies that upsell and/or cross-sell products for you, train your staff to identify these opportunities when speaking with customers.

Many ecommerce platforms also have a feature that automatically suggests a similar product to the one a customer is currently viewing. This built-in upselling and cross-selling feature is a fantastic way to increase holiday sales even after your roastery's operating hours.

You never know what upselling and cross-selling opportunities may arise during a conversation!

Use these tactics with your wholesale accounts too! Look at where you can upsell more coffee or cross-sell related products to your retail, grocery, and café customers. Can you convince a wholesale customer to order an extra five-pound bag or two to accommodate the holiday rush? Maybe you can offer a discount on paper cups or bottles of drink syrups with orders that pass \$200 in sales. The possibilities are endless!





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5. Creating Attractive Holiday Promotions

Tackle the Holiday Season With Confidence!

At the end of it all, the key to a profitable holiday season boils down to planning and execution.

We've given you lots of ideas on how to increase sales during the holiday season. Now it's your responsibility to choose the strategies that are right for you and determine how you plan to accomplish them.

Keep in mind, you don't have to use all five strategies! It's better to pick one or two strategies—like a seasonal blend and gift bundles—and execute them well, rather than implement five subpar plans.

We recommend starting your holiday planning around the beginning of September (if not earlier!) This gives you plenty of time to:

- Develop and promote a tasty **seasonal blend** (and organize your green coffee inventory accordingly!)
- Create relevant **gift bundles** for your retail shelves and online store
- Chat with **wholesale accounts** about holiday products, collaborative opportunities, and upcoming promotions
- Reach out to local corporations about **employee holiday gifts**
- Design **creative promotions** for upselling, cross-selling, and loyalty programs

As you prepare for increased orders, make sure your roastery is running as efficiently as possible and able to handle the influx of sales. And the best way to do that is with RoasterTools!

RoasterTools is the all-in-one business software designed to help your roastery streamline production, manage inventory, and grow during the holiday season and beyond!

Sign up for a demo today.



About RoasterTools

RoasterTools is the comprehensive business solution for coffee roasters to take orders, increase fulfillment accuracy and dramatically cut down on time & labor. Scale your roasting business confidently, eliminate human errors, and drive growth through automated solutions.



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Appendices

Check out these useful resources for your roastery:

COFFEE BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS

[Roast Magazine](#)

[Fresh Cup Magazine](#)

["The Coffee Roaster's Companion" by Scott Rao](#)

["Modulating the Flavor Profile of Coffee: One Roaster's Manifesto" by Rob Hoos](#)

["The Book of Roast: The Craft of Coffee Roasting From Bean to Business," by Roast Magazine](#)

["Green Coffee: A Guide for Roasters and Buyers" by Chris Kornman](#)

COFFEE ROASTING ORGANIZATIONS

[Specialty Coffee Association](#)

[Coffee Roaster's Guild](#)

