

Is Your Marketing Ready to Meet the Demands of Holiday 2021 and Beyond?

Five Strategies For Optimizing Today With an Eye Toward 2022



The 2020 holiday season tested brands in untold ways as they pivoted to serve customers' fluctuating needs. And as marketers anticipate holiday 2021 and beyond, they are once again ready to adapt to current conditions and fulfill pent-up demand.

While it's vital to drive sales during the remainder of the fourth quarter, a more pressing concern is the future, as brands look toward 2022 and the continually evolving landscape. The pandemic accelerated a shift to a more digital world and created changes in consumer shopping behavior that will undoubtedly have a lasting effect.

"Although many retailers have already planned their holiday content, creative strategy and promotional offers, we know they are equipped to respond nimbly to changing conditions and also use the holiday season as a springboard to formulate strategies for a robust 2022," says Karen DiClemente, who serves as senior director of strategy for Listrak, a marketing automation platform that provides retailers with integrated digital solutions.

To help supercharge your digital marketing, we have compiled five strategies and related last-minute insights and optimizations you can use for sales growth today – and into 2022.



STRATEGY 1:

Prepare for a Cookie-less Holiday

As retailers and brands grapple with the demise of third-party cookies, they realize that directly owning their customer relationships is critical. “By making owned channels, such as email and SMS, a key component of your holiday marketing mix, you can offset your reliance on paid media and avoid overspending,” says DiClemente. “While you can’t control what Google or Facebook may charge you, you have full control over how much you are investing in your own channels. But if you’re not maximizing those investments by converting visitors and collecting information, you’re missing out on a significant revenue opportunity.”

One particularly effective way to engage with as many potential buyers as possible is by combining your email and SMS marketing campaigns to reach consumers wherever they go online, from desktops to mobile devices.

However, using disparate vendors can make cross-channel orchestration difficult when speed is the currency. For example, if a customer signs up for an email offer through a pop-up on your website run by a dedicated SMS provider, they’ll have to wait until the address is routed back to the ESP to trigger the welcome email, which could take minutes or even hours, a delay that could cost you the sale.

There’s a danger of oversending through both channels or, conversely, missing out on an opportunity because you lack visibility to the recipient’s preferences and how they’re engaging with your messages. A holistic view will show that someone hasn’t opened an email in 90 days so you can then exclude them from future broadcast emails while focusing on SMS.

“As a marketer, you have to understand what messages each provider is sending and when to marry them,” DiClemente says. “If you’re using disparate partners, you won’t gain that full profile of the user and how they’re engaging with all their channels.”

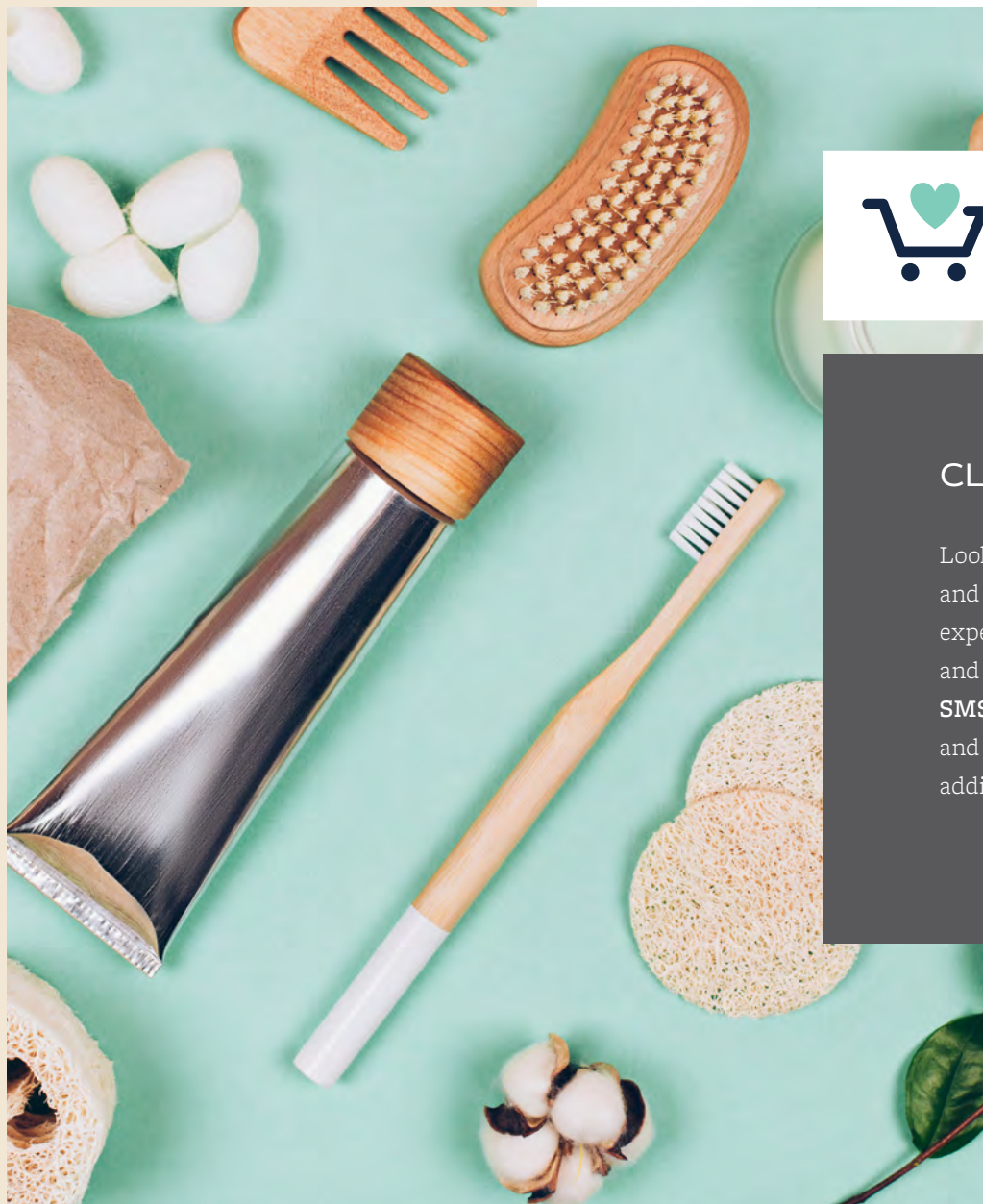
LAURA GELLER

CLIENT CASE STUDY:

AS Beauty (Laura Geller) assumed the ideal strategy for choosing best-in-breed providers for email and SMS was to separate them. But as metrics and revenue declined in both channels, they turned to Listrak to consolidate the channels, thereby optimizing their spend and offering an orchestrated customer experience. **These efforts yielded over 217% revenue growth and 299% SMS list growth.**

217% + **299%**
Revenue growth SMS list growth





CLIENT CASE STUDY:

Looking to level up their current marketing programs and consolidate vendors to create a consistent customer experience, Health-E Commerce chose Listrak's unified and integrated platform for email, mobile and **CRM**. **SMS revenue skyrocketed with a 2,104% increase**, and email also increased 117% in the first 90 days. In addition, **SMS list growth is averaging 30% per month**.

2,104% + **30%**

SMS revenue increase

SMS list growth

STRATEGY 2:

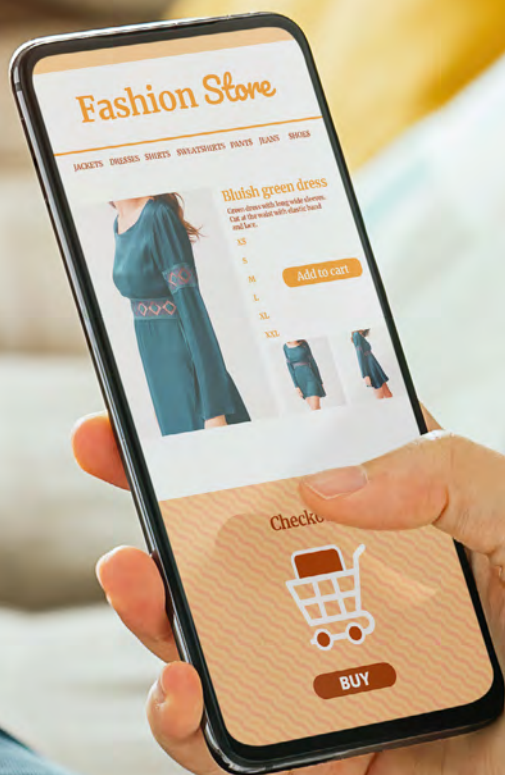
Prioritize Acquisition, Identity and List Growth

Paid media can be a drain on your marketing, with high costs for impressions and clicks – consider that Facebook’s average CPM is up a whopping 47%. But those funds are ultimately wasted if you don’t convert the traffic that lands on your site. The goal is to collect sufficient information about their browsing and shopping behavior so you can eventually retarget them with relevant emails or an enticing post-purchase campaign.

One solution is a two-step, responsive pop-up that captures both email and mobile number; Listrak has found that retailers who engage shoppers in both channels can drive increased affinity with 30% higher customer lifetime value, 15% more orders and 10% higher average order value than with email alone.

“Since as much as 95% of traffic to a website is anonymous, you have to use strategically aggressive acquisition tactics to compile as much zero-party data as possible,” says DiClemente.





That goes beyond a pop-up which your visitor can click out of any time, she points out. “You want to constantly remind them of the value you’re offering, whether it’s with a persistent sticky button or banner or an exit pop-up that allows you to dynamically inject the coupon code into the pop-up and follow the shopper around, displaying that one-time code.”

You can also personalize acquisition tactics and on-site communication based on traffic source, offering a different experience for those sent by influencers than affiliates or for previous customers compared with first-timers.

While you don’t want to skimp on discounting, it’s possible to do it selectively by assessing likelihood to buy. For example, brands can be more aggressive with an offer to those who have never purchased before or have abandoned their cart, while holding back for a subscriber who’s been constantly opening emails and browsing on the site. The goal is to be smart about preserving margin and showing offers judiciously, says DiClemente. “Brands realize they have to stop last year’s blanket promotional behavior and wean shoppers off expecting a coupon code for every purchase.”

Soft Surroundings

my time. my place. my self.

CLIENT CASE STUDY:

Soft Surroundings saw a 655% increase in **daily opt-ins** by leveraging Listrak's Growth Xcelerator Platform to increase acquisition and drive conversion. Their strategy was to be more aggressive, though not intrusive, by using a persistent sticky button to dynamically inject a coupon code.

655%

Increase in daily opt-ins





SOKO GLAM

CLIENT CASE STUDY:

Soko Glam migrated an existing SMS program to Listrak. With both email and SMS list growth as priorities, the beauty brand leveraged a combination of a mobile tap-to-join popup and a two-step popup on desktop. Each promotes an aggressive, 15%-off incentive for an email address and phone number. **The single engagement strategy has successfully maximized revenue potential, generating a 3.4% campaign conversion rate, and desktop subscribers comprise almost a quarter of the total SMS list size.**

3.4% + **24%**
Campaign conversion rate Of total SMS subscriber base

STRATEGY 3:

Foster Engagement To Ensure Visitors Become Browsers, and Browsers Become Buyers

As you collect zero- and first-party data, work with your email and SMS partner to understand the information being captured and how you can use it to target and personalize your messages.

“Identity resolution,” which helps you match someone across various devices and touchpoints, allows marketers to recognize the traffic they should know – as in, visitors they’ve seen before – and request opt-ins from the traffic they don’t. Having your email and SMS partner leverage identity resolution is even more efficient as more carts can be “reachable” and offers can be controlled based on a contact’s previous individual purchase behavior.

Remember, though, that customers expect a personalized experience in return for their data. Honor your part of this agreement by maximizing use of behaviorally relevant triggers, such as cart abandonment, price drop alerts, low inventory alerts, back-in-stock and applicable product recommendations. “Those are the messages that have the highest engagement and the highest revenue per email,” DiClemente says, and they’re where shoppers often appreciate your involvement.





Brands should maintain a strong, consistent email- and SMS-sending cadence to ensure a steady flow of qualified return traffic. Make sure that the messages are logical for the channel; for example, using SMS to tout new arrivals, location-based events, flash sales and other newsy, timely items, while reserving email for longer lead times and more involved content.

This strategy further underscores the importance of cross-channel orchestration, DiClemente notes. “You want to strategically time and trigger messages based on the contact’s actions and channel preferences,” she says, adding that you can even use these shopping behaviors to support your marketing efforts in other channels. “As contacts flow through email and/or SMS abandonment campaigns, use the functionality that your provider offers to make it easy to connect and retarget those contacts in your social or paid search channels.”

She also recommends consulting your email/SMS partner to use their standard form builder tools to execute pre-order sign-up forms or campaigns for highly anticipated launches of seasonal items or product introductions. “When possible, preview new products well in advance of the arrival of inventory, which allows all visitors the opportunity to sign up for notifications,” she advises.



CLIENT CASE STUDY:

JEGS turned to Listrak to reach an aggressive goal of 40% year over year growth, which they knew Listrak could help them attain based on previous exceptional results. Using Listrak's Growth Xcelerator Platform, which includes identity resolution, **JEGS saw a 200% increase in triggered email revenue lift** by deploying personalized tactics that allowed them to drive growth even during their typical off-season months.

200%

Increase in triggered
email revenue lift





CLIENT CASE STUDY:

A fast growing DTC skincare client used Listrak's pop-up to take pre-order sign ups, **generating more than \$500K of sales in a few days** through the pre-order contacts who signed up.

\$500K

Generated sales in a few days
through the pre-order contacts



STRATEGY 4:

Continue To Nurture the Customer After Every Sale

Your current customers are apt to be your most lucrative in the long run, says Frederick Reichheld of Bain & Company, who invented the Net Promoter Score (NPS) as a quick pulse on how well you're doing. His research finds that increasing retention rates by just 5% can raise overall profits by 25% to 95%.

When brands are in the midst of elevated holiday traffic, it's imperative to implement a powerful post-purchase strategy so as to retain these new subscribers and buyers acquired during the fourth quarter.

Since transactional messages often have the highest engagement rates, this is the place to pull out all the stops. For example, as use of Buy Online, Pick-Up in Store (BOPIS) accelerates, sophisticated retailers are now adding transactional messages to communicate process details, then confirming when the order has physically been delivered. Or, a "thank you"

email sent in between the order confirmation and shipping confirmation email adds a touchpoint that contains additional marketing content to encourage repeat purchases.

"As brands look for ways to keep shoppers informed and engaged during and after the delivery process, focus on post-purchase efforts that are elevated from basic order and shipping confirmation messages," says DiClemente. "After all, no one is ever going to alert you to a missing marketing email, but they are paying keen attention to order confirmation or shipping details. Maximize this existing real estate so you don't waste the fact that you already have eyeballs on these messages."

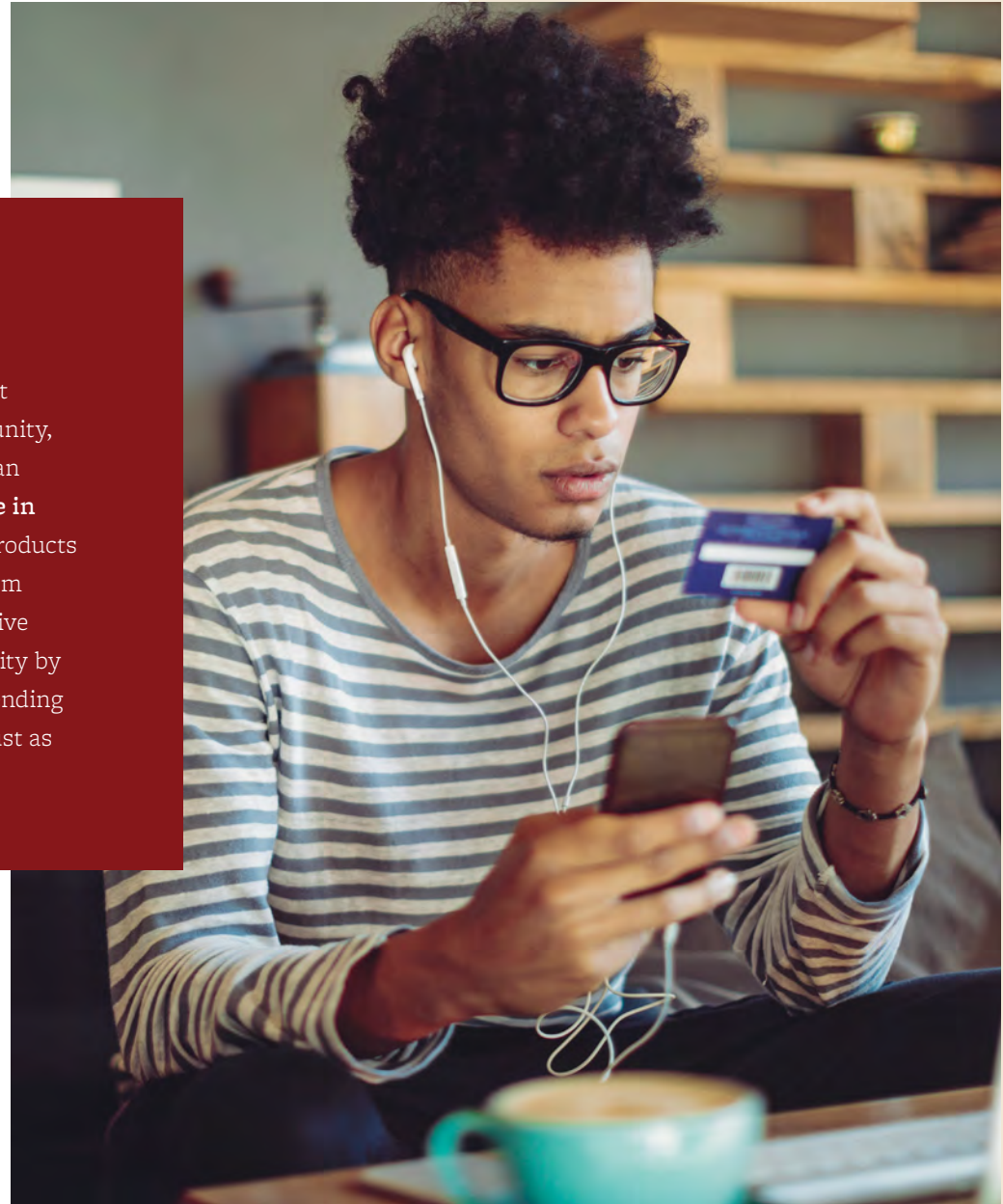
After imparting order or transaction details, you can get creative and attract attention by leveraging the zero- and first-party data you've collected to serve up relevant, highly personalized product recommendations to drive cross sells and upsells; a call to action to engage with your brand on social or visit the nearest brick-and-mortar location; or invitations to write a review or join referral and loyalty programs. You can even consider using the purchase data available via your email/SMS partner to serve different content and messages for first-time versus repeat customers and tailoring it to the merchandise they have purchased.

CLIENT CASE STUDY:

By creating lifecycle-specific content to draw recent customers back for an additional purchase opportunity, a large, multi-channel sporting goods retailer saw an **8% conversion rate, leading to a substantial rise in retention and revenue**. The key was promoting products relevant to the category from which the original item was purchased so a camper and hunter would receive different emails. The store also increased profitability by testing when an offer was necessary rather than sending it to everyone, proving that relevant content was just as motivating as an offer for some consumers.

8%

Conversion rate, leading to
a substantial rise in retention
and revenue





STRATEGY 5:

Remember the Last Mile is Also Critical for Digital

Any retailer knows the puzzle of the “last mile” when delivering goods. But, this concept applies to digital messages as well. With ISPs aiming to control email flow, marketers need to have a handle on their current message inbox rate to understand how changes in segmentation strategies can improve or hurt domain reputation or delivery, then make requisite changes now.

“Consult the deliverability team at your email/SMS partner ahead of the holidays to identify issues and develop related tactics that improve your delivery rate to maximize engagement during this key time,” DiClemente says.

Also make sure the entire retail team knows how to reach all the key points of contact for their accounts at your email/SMS provider(s) and other vendor partners so they can reach out if there’s a glitch, regardless of the time of day or day of the week. And if you work with a vendor who doesn’t offer 24/7 phone support, understand what the potential response time will be, especially if the emergency occurs outside of the vendor’s business/support hours.

Ready Or Not... Here it Comes

As this holiday season shapes up to be just as dynamic as 2020, marketers are prioritizing the ability to be agile to take advantage of shifting opportunities, says DiClemente. “Our clients who are thriving are those who studied their results from last holiday season, with an eye toward improving on them with upgraded tactics that will bring them success during holiday 2021 and into 2022.”

Are you ready for success? There’s still time to tweak 2021 strategies and plan ahead now to start 2022 strong.





Listrak is an established leader in the cross-channel marketing industry. Listrak works with more than 1,000 leading retailers and brands to drive higher levels of engagement and revenue through best-in-class email, SMS, identify resolution, behavioral triggers and cross-channel orchestration. Listrak has an industry-leading Net Promoter Score through its singular focus on driving results. With Listrak, retailers gain more than a technology platform; they gain a long-term, strategic partnership with retail marketing experts who become an extension of their team to help execute growth strategies and exceed their goals.

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