

**+ASSEMBLY**

# **2025** **HOLIDAY** **PREVIEW**

**Intention Is The New Impulse  
This Holiday Season**



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# 2025 holiday guide overview

Our Strategy, Insights & Connections team in collaboration with our Experience & Activation and Business Consulting friends have prepared this year's Holiday Preview Guide for you.

## What we learned

Consumers will be spending money. But remember, this is the year of intention so sales growth will be modest. Our primary research shows that consumers will exhibit five holiday habits this season. Wish lists will continue to be made earlier. Don't dismiss the role of brick and mortar. Shopping at a physical store has become a magical place to spark joy while digital storefronts continue to be the go-to destinations for deals and promotions.

## What you should do

Read it from cover to cover, of course! But, most importantly, use content to incite meaningful conversations with clients.

Happy reading!



01

# Macroeconomics impacting holiday





**Global GDP is  
Forecasted to  
Stabilize with  
Minimal  
Growth YoY**

### Global GDP Growth Forecast

**3.0%** → **3.1%**  
2025 2026

Fiscal support and policy responses help offset the drag from new trade measures and global uncertainty.





The U.S.  
Economy is  
slowly  
growing just  
at a lower rate  
than the  
global GDP

### US GDP Growth Forecast



Minimal growth is expected alongside policy uncertainty, trade tensions, and weaker consumer sentiment.



# We Know Tariffs Dampens Consumer Sentiment

## Tensions cracks in optimism

While consumer spending remained relatively strong through 2024, as we approach holiday 2025, geopolitical tensions are weighing on consumer sentiment by heightening economic pessimism and increasing income uncertainty, with women generally more pessimistic than men.

## Tariffs driving fears

Adding to the strain are newly implemented tariffs on goods from over 60 countries, along with retaliatory measures, driving fears of rising prices, product shortages, and delayed shipments.

# 51%

of consumers say the current tariff situation will have a significant or moderate impact on their holiday shopping

*Assembly Holiday Study, 2025*

# 62%

of women say the economy and inflation are worsening, compared to only 47% of men

*Harris Poll/Guardian*

# 54%

of consumers agreed that financial stress makes it difficult to celebrate the winter holidays as they would prefer

*Mintel*



Which is why consumers  
aren't spending much  
annually

**+1.4%**

in 2025

**+1.5%**

in 2026

US Economic Forecast Q2 2025 (Deloitte), World  
Economic Outlook (IMF)



## 4 factors might stimulate spend

- Real wage growth amid cooling inflation may create more purchasing power
- Lower interest rates & easier credit access could stimulate big-ticket purchases
- Hyper-personalization through AI-powered commerce may spark new impulse spending
- Policy reform may boost competition, lowering cost and improving access



# This Puts Holiday Sales Forecast on Rocky Ground

November through December holiday sales will rise by 1.2%, *below* the full-year, 2025 growth rate of 1.4%

Mintel, eMarketer

+1.2%

YoY Growth

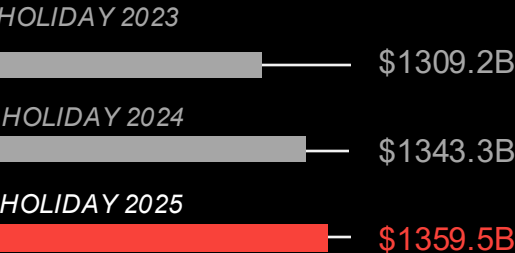
+4.2%

YoY Growth

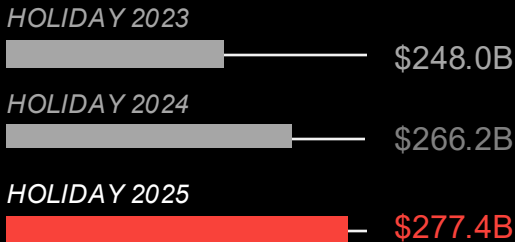
+0.4%

YoY Growth

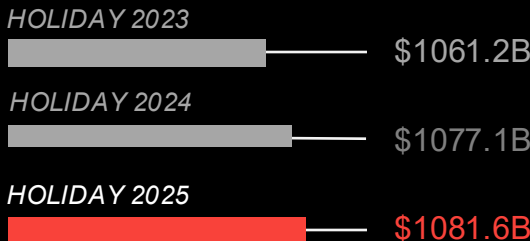
## TOTAL RETAIL SALES



## ECOMMERCE



## BRICK & MORTAR



# Consumers Believe Certain Types of Holiday Products Are More Vulnerable to Pricing, Policy and Inventory Constraints

## Reliance on Imports

Electronics and toys have the perception of being the most impacted due to global sourcing and price sensitivity, making tariff costs harder to absorb.

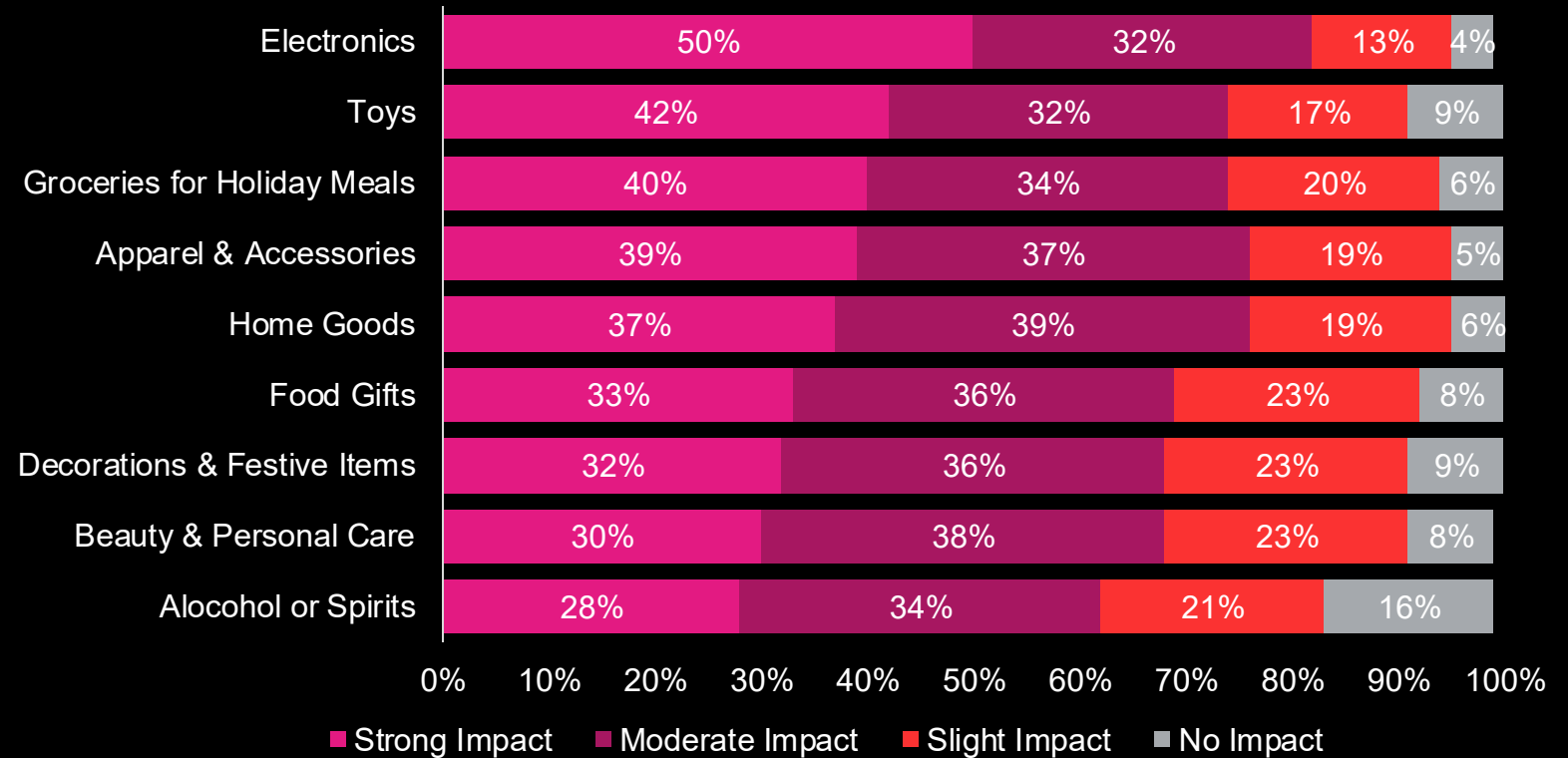
## Policy Awareness

Categories like apparel and home goods are seen as vulnerable, possibly because consumers associate them with tariff-targeted regions.

## Known Availability

Items like alcohol, beauty, and decorations may be viewed as less affected due to perceived local sourcing and steady shelf presence.

*Q: How much of an impact do you think tariffs will have on the following types of holiday products this year?*



02

# The holiday shopper decoded



**Survey says!**

## Unwrapping insights about the holiday shopper

To crack the code on holiday shopping behavior, Assembly went straight to the source: **the shoppers themselves**. In July, we surveyed 1,035 Americans aged 18 or older to uncover what's really driving their clicks, carts, and wish lists. We dug into the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs shaping their holiday spirit.

Why? Because a more intentional holiday strategy doesn't just follow the trends, it understands what's driving them to create more relevant and timely experiences.



# Top 5 holiday behaviors

- 01** Stretching Joy, Not Wallets
- 02** Friction-Free or Forget It
- 03** In-Store Magic Has Meaning
- 04** Less Stuff, More Meaning
- 05** Younger Shoppers, Bigger Influence







# Stretching Joy, Not Wallets

Shoppers are planning ahead and prioritizing value as they brace for higher costs and economic uncertainty.



# Budget Brains Are Driving the Sleigh

## Concerns Top of Mind

With inflation, tariffs, and ongoing cost-of-living concerns top of mind, consumers are trying to reduce financial strain by starting their holiday shopping early or on schedule

## Value-Seeking Mindset

Shoppers are adopting a value-seeking mindset to maximize deals, avoid last-minute stress, and feel more in control. They are increasingly motivated by pre-season sales, shopping lists, and early-bird discounts.

## Assembly POV

Brands that support this value-driven mindset with transparent pricing, clear promotional calendars, and planning tools will earn trust in a price-sensitive environment.

# 87%

of consumers say they plan to start shopping earlier or at the same time as last year

*Assembly Holiday Study, 2025*

## WHY, YOU ASK?

# 47%

Say they are starting earlier to help spread out spending and manage their budget

*Assembly Holiday Study, 2025*

# 46%

Say they are starting earlier to take advantage of early deals

*Assembly Holiday Study, 2025*

## Turkey 12 is the new Cyber 5

Retailers tap value-driven shoppers by launching early deals in the lead-up to Cyber Five, starting Nov. 20.



Planning early is more than just a slide headline, it's the name of the game.

Search queries for "Gifts" increased **+50% in October 2024**. In previous years, this increase was only +22%.

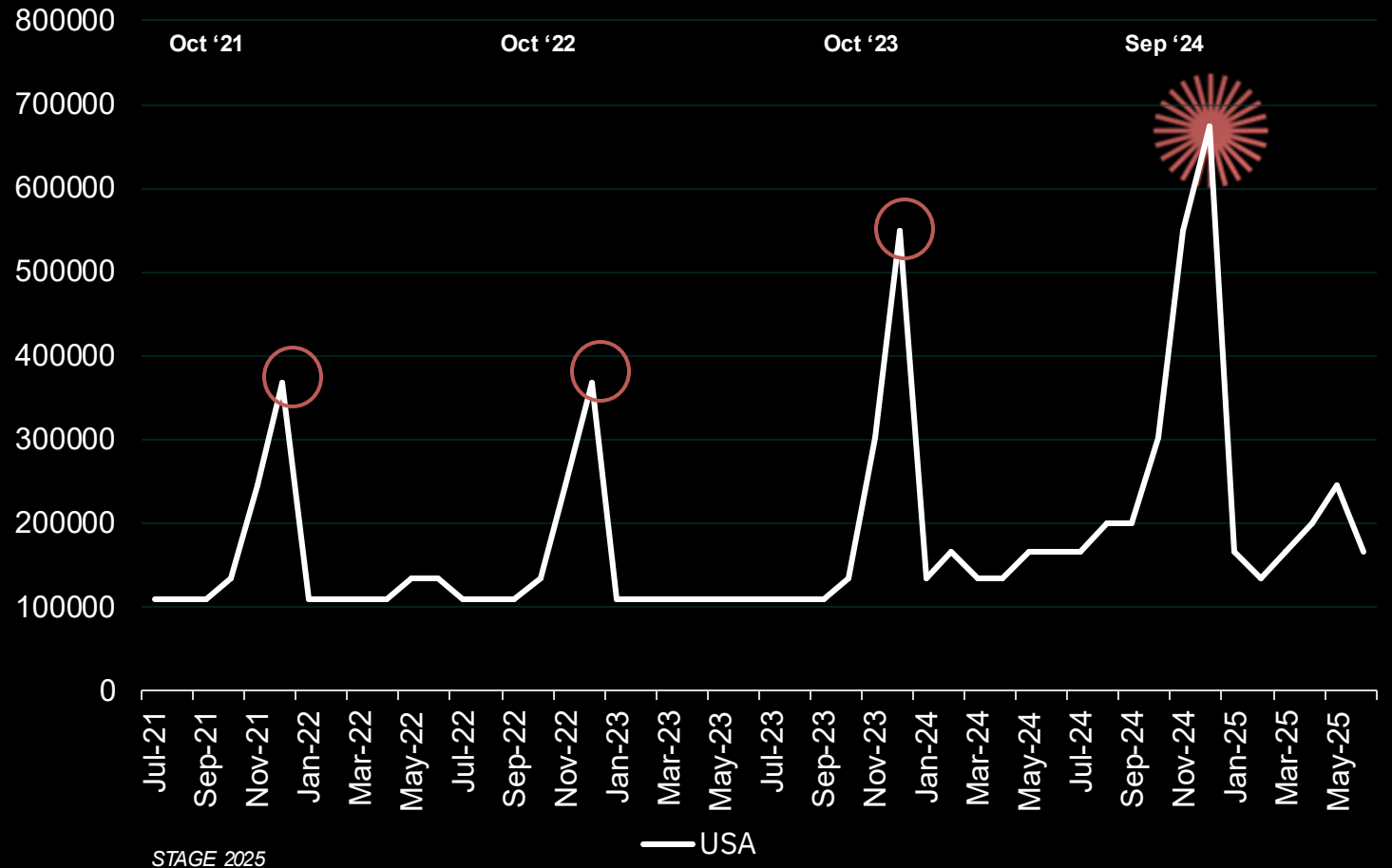
STAGE 2025



Women are **25% more likely** to already know what they want to buy than men

Assembly Holiday Study, 2025

## Search Queries for "Gifts"

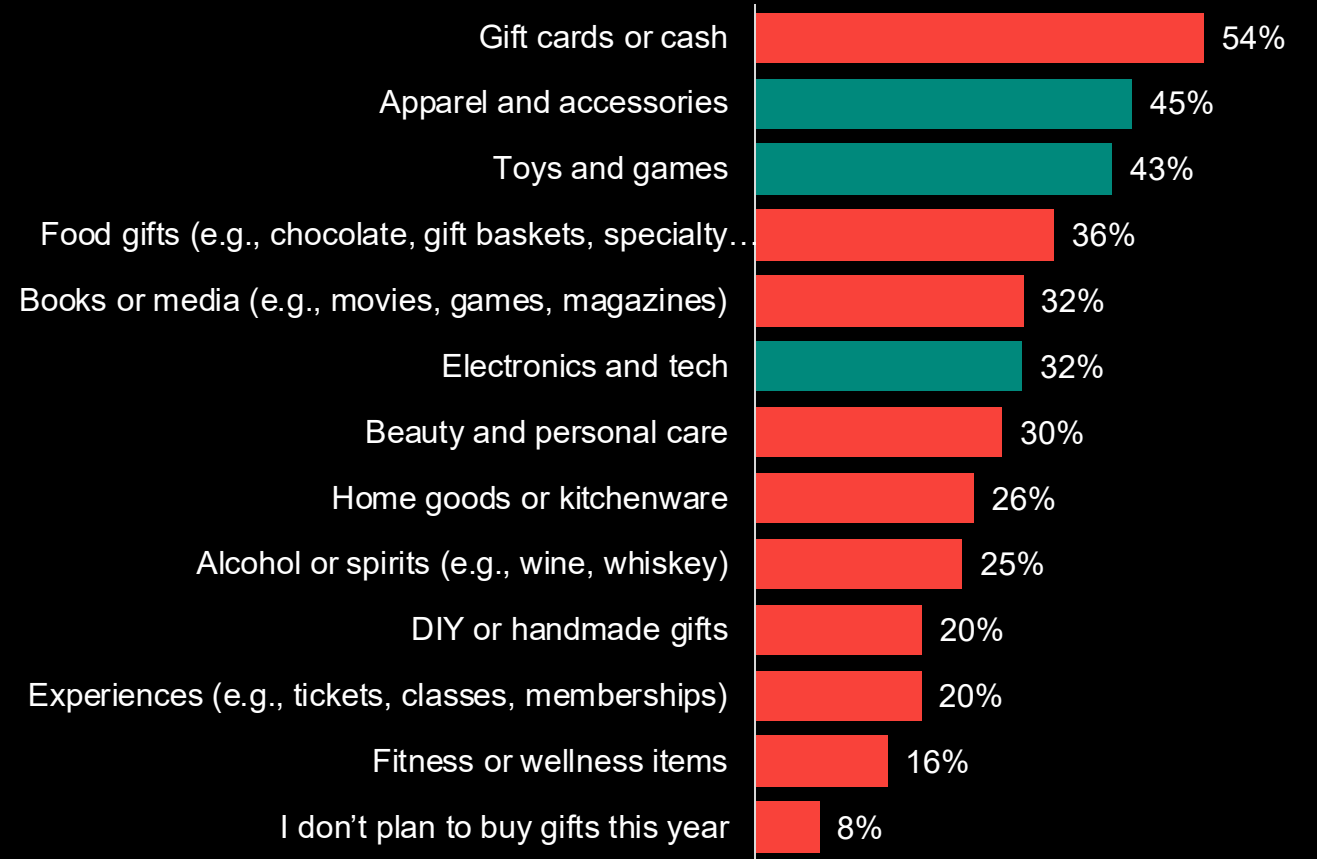




Tariff impact concerns aside, toys, tech, and apparel remain holiday staples for gifting



## In which of the following categories do you plan to buy gifts this holiday season??



Assembly Holiday Study, 2025

# Serving Up Joy At Home This Holiday Season

**41%**

plan to host family or friends at my home

*Assembly Holiday Study, 2025*

**89%**

like when brands provide easy, festive food or drink recipes for the holiday

**71%**

look forward to making custom holiday cocktails for my gatherings

**89%**

like their home feel extra festive and cozy during holidays

This season, the party is at home. Consumers are turning to at-home gatherings as a meaningful and manageable way to celebrate. Cozy vibes, festive cocktails and easy food creations become affordable luxuries, allowing shoppers to create joyful, memorable moments without breaking the (festive) bank

## Assembly POV

Brands that offer simple, joyful solutions for at-home entertaining can become part of the moment.





## Friction-Free or Forget It

Today's shoppers don't think in channels, they think in needs. They expect a fluid experience between in-store and online — convenience is now the baseline, not a bonus.



# From Click to Cart to Curbside, Seamless is Standard

## Dissolved Divide

The divide between digital and physical shopping has largely dissolved—consumers now expect to move seamlessly between platforms

## Convenience Reigns

Shoppers browse in-store, compare online, and expect inventory and checkout systems to be synced. Digital tools like wayfinding, mobile checkout, and click-to-collect are no longer novelties but expectations

## Assembly POV

The most successful brands will be those that remove friction across all touchpoints, creating a unified and efficient experience that respects consumers' time and preferences.



**49%**

Say they use their smartphone “most” out of all their devices, when shopping online for holiday gifts

*Assembly Holiday Study*

# AI is the New Elf

This season, AI is embedded in every stage of the shopper journey, from inspiration to checkout.

Consumers are increasingly relying on smart recommendations, voice prompts, and predictive tools to guide their choices. The brands that build trust here earn loyalty before the first gift is wrapped.

## 14%

of consumers say they expect to get inspiration for holiday gifts from AI this year

*Assembly Holiday Study, 2025*

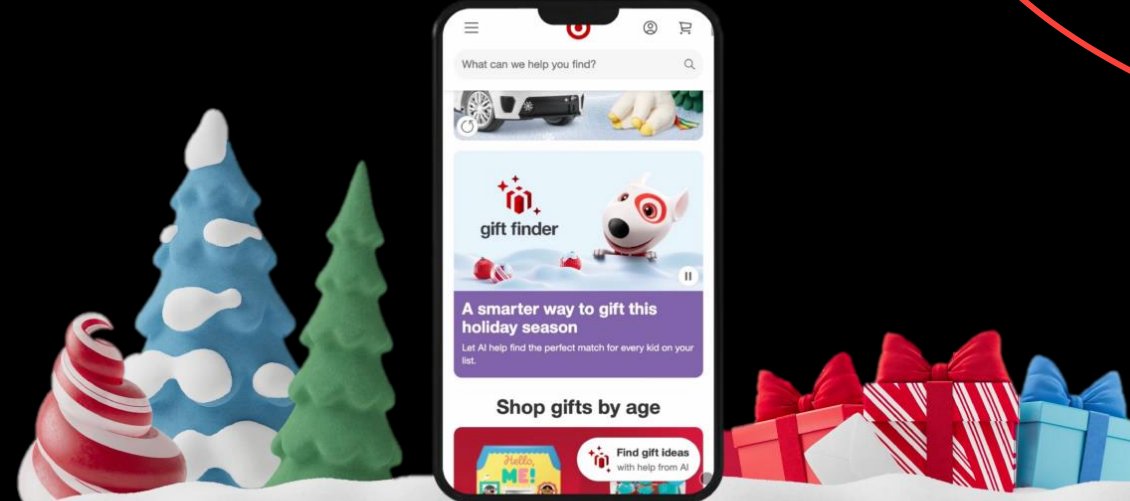
### Assembly POV

With brands like Target and Best Buy rolling out AI gift curators based on personal info and preference, AI adoption may be greater as shoppers see the value of personalized recommendations.

## 63%

Of consumers plan to shop big-box retailers this holiday season

*Assembly Holiday Study, 2025*







## In-store Magic Has Meaning

Even in a digital world, the store remains a source of holiday joy, nostalgia, and social connection.



# In-store Is Where Spirit Meets the Shelf

## A Joyful Escape

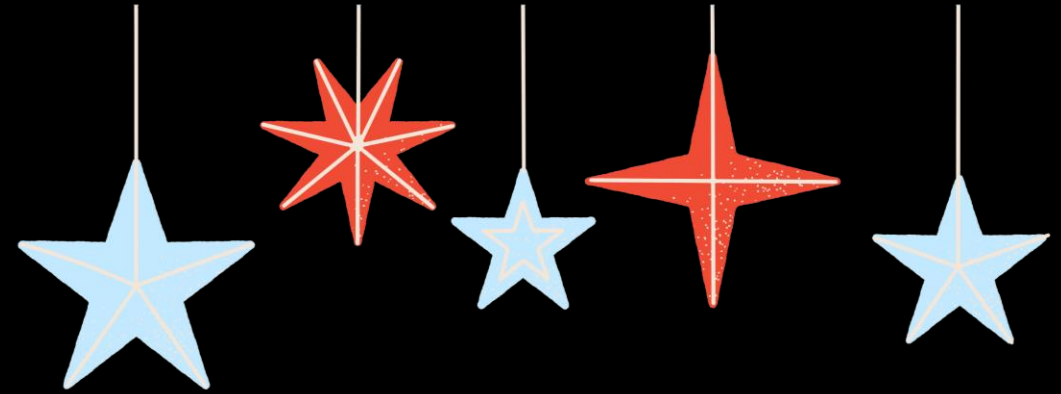
In-store experiences that offer a sense of calm or spark nostalgic joy—through immersive displays, themed events, and interactive elements like workshops, photo booths, or sampling stations—resonate with consumers looking to escape a world overwhelmed by ongoing crises

## A Social Space

Many people see holiday shopping as more than just a task—it's a way to connect. In-store trips with friends and family are a beloved ritual, offering a chance to spend time together and contribute to their sense of social well-being.

## Assembly POV

Brands that intentionally blend storytelling, sensory design, and interactive moments – both online and in-store - can inspire loyalty and create reasons to visit that go beyond transactions.



# 59%

of consumers say that shopping in stores is part  
of the holiday fun

[Assembly Holiday Study, 2025]

# Lego Gifts the Superpower of Play In-Store and Online



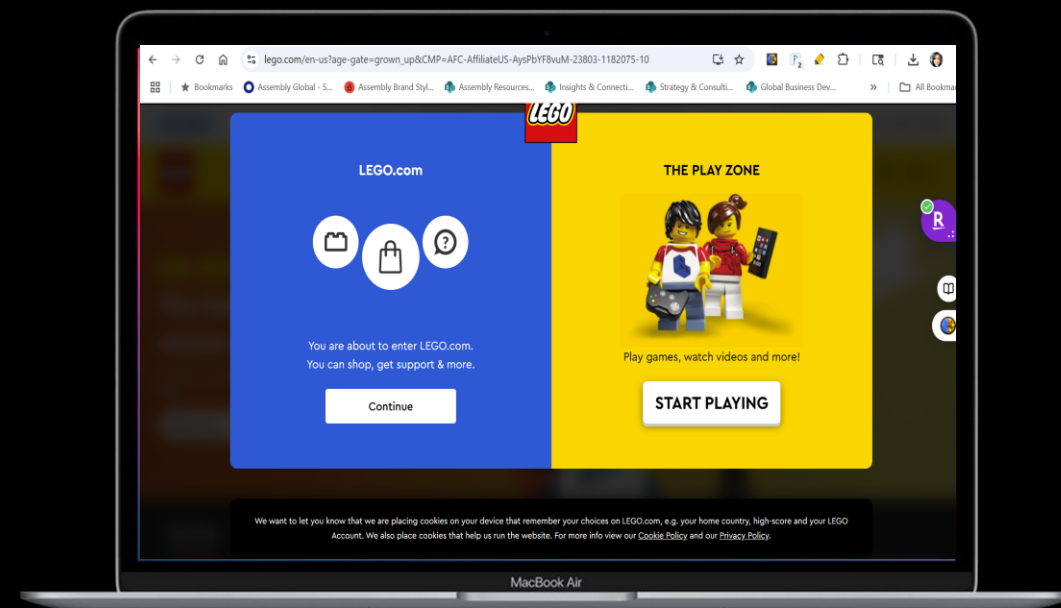
**Lego's Holiday  
2024**

**Campaign:  
Time to Gift the  
Superpower of  
Play**



## FROM STORES TO SOCIAL PLAY HUBS

By inviting families to build, play, and connect through festive activations like Make & Take Cataclaws, Build to Give stations, and personalized Minifigure creation. These interactive experiences turn holiday shopping into a shared ritual of creativity and joy—full of surprise, nostalgia, and hands-on creativity.



## A JOYFUL ESCAPE ON-SITE

Lego extends the magic of play to its digital destinations, offering a joyful escape on lego.com. LEGO's Shop or Play homepage invites users to choose their own joyful path—whether through interactive storytelling, digital games, or creative building prompts.







# Less Stuff, More Meaning

A “fewer but better” mindset is guiding gift-giving, with personalization and practicality taking center stage.



# Fewer, Better, More Practical

# 71%

of consumers say they will give fewer gifts if it means giving better ones

*Assembly Holiday Study, 2025*

# 77%

of consumers that will buy fewer gifts, will try to find more practical and useful ones

*Assembly Holiday Study, 2025*

## More Practical Gifting

Gift-giving remains at the emotional core of the holiday season, but the approach is becoming more thoughtful. Consumers want their spending to feel meaningful and well-matched, not excessive or wasteful

# 57%

of consumers that will buy fewer gifts, plan on giving gift cards or cash

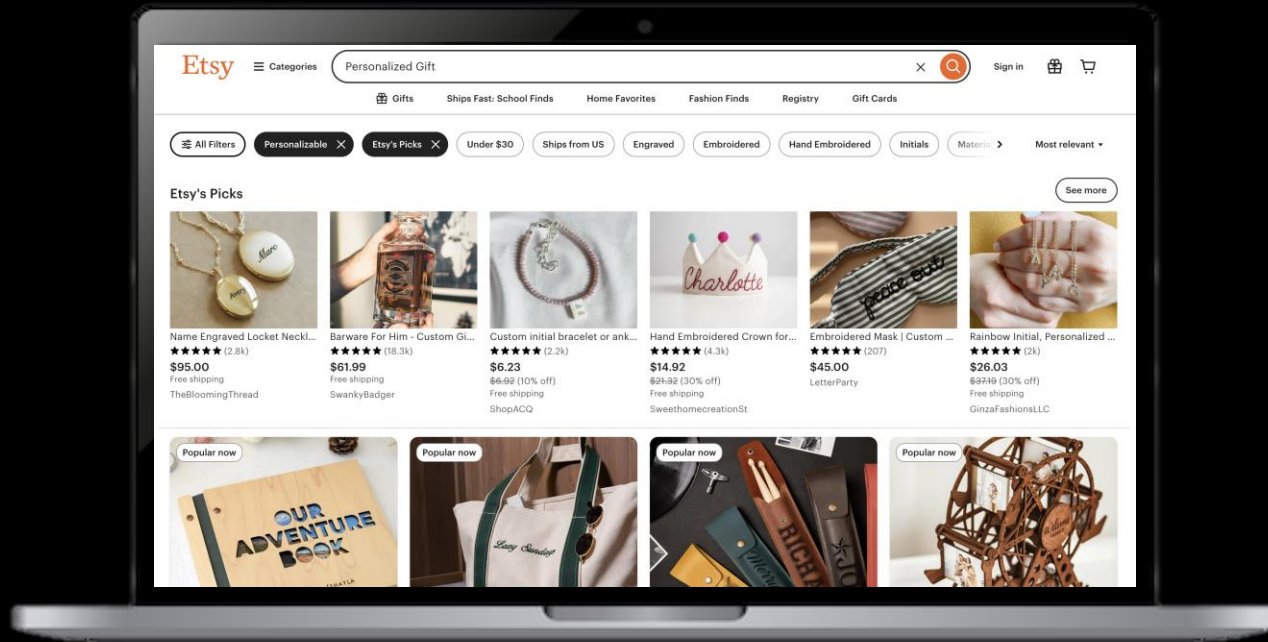
*Assembly Holiday Study, 2025*

## Assembly POV

Brands that offer thoughtful, customizable, and purpose-driven gifting options can meet consumer demand for quality over quantity, even in a cautious spending climate.



# Handpicked, Handmade, Heartfelt



## 33%

of consumers that will buy fewer gifts, will give more handmade, personalized or custom gifts this year

*Assembly Holiday Study, 2025*

## Crafted > Clicked

Homemade gifts aren't just budget-friendly—they're a creative flex and a love language. From knit scarves to homemade spice blends, consumers are putting their time where their heart is. It's not about perfection, it's about presence, intention, and the joy of making something that says, "I really thought about you."



## 71%

of consumers that will buy fewer gifts, will prioritize gifts that feel personal to the recipient

*Assembly Holiday Study, 2025*

## The Etsy Effect

Platforms like Etsy are thriving because they tap into what mass retail can't: gifts that feel personal, thoughtful, and made just for them. Whether it's initials, inside jokes, or zodiac signs, consumers are craving emotional relevance. In a sea of sameness, personalization is the shortcut to meaning.



## Younger Shoppers, Bigger Influence

Gen Z and Millennials are emerging as holiday power shoppers, driving spend across gifting, self-treats, and social experiences.





# Youth-Led Spending Drives Holiday Growth

## Generational Spending

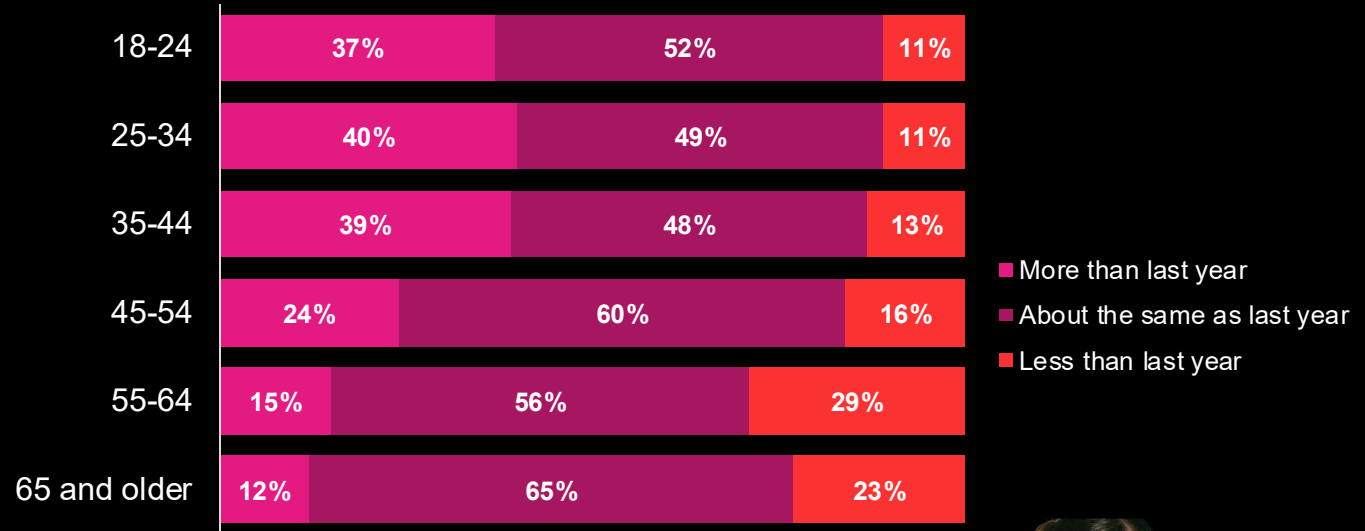
While older generations pull back, younger shoppers are powering the season forward. Their priorities extend beyond traditional gifting. Friendsgiving, self-gifting, and experience-based celebrations are reshaping the calendar.

## Transitions Drive Confidence

Rising incomes, purchasing power and life-stage transitions are driving confidence among younger consumers.

## Assembly POV

Brands who speak to the values of the young —personalization, purpose, and shared connection—can win the loyalty of these digital natives who are defining what the modern holiday season looks like.



*Assembly Holiday Study, 2025*



# Connection Over Consumption

For younger shoppers, the best gifts don't come in boxes, they come with memories. Gifting shared experiences is a win-win: it brings people closer and feels more meaningful.

## Assembly POV

Brands that collaborate with experience-driven partners, from concerts to classes, can win with shoppers looking to gift moments, not just merchandise.

# 53%

of consumers aged 25-34 say they prefer giving experiences over physical items

*Assembly Holiday Study, 2025*

# 57%

of consumers aged 25-34 say they prefer giving gifts that create shared experiences we can enjoy together (spa visits, concerts, movie tickets)

*Assembly Holiday Study, 2025*



# The Nitty Gritty: Key Considerations When Planning For Holiday

## **1. Start Earlier and Stagger Campaigns**

Don't be dark in September or October. Stagger messaging to match consumer planning, deal-hunting, and purchase cycles.

## **2. Upweight Joyful Digital and IRL Environments**

Use Outdoor, social, and digital to spark holiday joy. From in-store activations to AR, vibrant events, and pop-ups, turn shopping into a shared, joyful celebration.

## **3. Mirror Message and Media to Intentional Journey**

Build platform-native content to mirror intentional shopping patterns— social/influencer for inspiration, retail media and peer reviews for comparison, and search intent for conversion.

## **4. Use Media to Make Gift Giving Easier**

Power ads with utility: inventory feeds, store locators, gift guides, or AI tools that simplify decision-making and remove friction.

## **5. Personalize with Purpose**

Promote meaningful, well-matched gifts and experiences — like customizable or practical options — tailored to values, interests, or life stage.





03

# Creating more intentional holiday experiences





# Holiday Marketing Budgets are down 12% as Social, Video & Magazine Gain share

Media	Q4 Mix	Oct (\$) YoY	Nov (\$) YoY	Dec (\$) YoY	Q4 (\$) YoY	Q4 Mix YoY (% points)
Paid Search	36%	(14%)	(16%)	(22%)	(18%)	(2.6)
Paid Social	34%	(11%)	(4%)	(2%)	(5%)	2.3
Online Video	6%	(10%)	3%	15%	3%	0.8
OTT	5%	(19%)	(8%)	0%	(8%)	0.2
Display	2%	(43%)	(23%)	(29%)	(32%)	(0.5)
Mobile App	1%	(48%)	(58%)	(56%)	(54%)	(0.9)
Linear TV	12%	(14%)	(14%)	(2%)	(10%)	0.3
Radio	2%	(15%)	(5%)	1%	(6%)	0.1
Outdoor	1%	3%	(1%)	12%	4%	0.2
Newspaper	1%	(20%)	(34%)	(25%)	(27%)	(0.1)
Magazines	1%	20%	40%	46%	35%	0.2
Total	100%	(14%)	(11%)	(11%)	(12%)	

Pathmatics/Media360 for Retail category.  
No data source for Affiliate is available

## Brand and performance touchpoints **work together.**

### Social to Power Performance

Retailers are shifting from search to social—especially TikTok and LinkedIn—as AI-enhanced ad offerings evolve to mirror search-like behavior and drive performance.

### Lean Into Intention

As consumers embrace more intentional media habits, retailers are investing in video and magazines for their high-attention, high-impact environment

### Grab Early Demand

Retailers prioritizing budget closer to holiday which leaves an opportunity to take advantage of early planning and demand within a less competitive landscape



# Here's Your **Intentional** Holiday Checklist To Fuel Growth This Season



## 12 Touchpoints:

Organic Search

**OPEN**

Paid Search

**OPEN**

Social

**OPEN**

Affiliate

**OPEN**

Display

**OPEN**

Marketplace

**OPEN**

Video

**OPEN**

Print

**OPEN**

Audio

**OPEN**

Direct Mail

**OPEN**

Outdoor

**OPEN**

Tech & Innovation

**OPEN**





# Organic search tactics to create more intentional holiday experiences

46% of US shoppers used search engines to find holiday product ideas. Use organic's technical and content pillars to enter your brand into consumers' decision-making process.

Statista



ORGANIC SEARCH TACTICS CHECKLIST	
Feed AI with Machine-Readable, Context-Rich Content	
Add schema markup (e.g. Product, Review, VideoObject) to key pages	
Use semantic HTML and structured headers to organize content	
Build Topical Authority with Helpful, Relevant Content	
Publish gift guides, comparisons, and expert-driven pieces	
Refresh older content with updated data and holiday context	
Increase Brand Visibility in AI and Human Search	
Develop content clusters aligned to key shopper needs – value, personalized gifts, experiences	
Earn brand mentions and backlinks through PR and partnerships	
Deliver a Fast, Trustworthy, Shopper-Friendly Experience	
Ahead of Q4 prioritize mproving Core Web Vitals and mobile speed ahead	
Display strong trust signals like reviews and clear policies	



# Paid search tactics to create more intentional holiday experiences

AI-fueled search campaigns reach consumers throughout their holiday shopping journey.

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## PAID SEARCH TACTICS CHECKLIST

### Adapt To How Consumers Search And Shop In 2025

Embrace multimodal discovery with Performance Max and Demand Gen. Ensure your product and video content is optimized for search, surfaces, and visual match experiences.

Audit PDPs for structured data, clear product descriptions, and visual assets to support shopping & visual placements.

### Fuel AI-Powered Campaigns With High-Quality Signals

Inform AI-Powered campaigns with strong first-party audience signals and full-funnel conversion values (ie: online and in-store sales).

Use Enhanced Conversions and GA4 events to improve model accuracy and signal quality.

### Diversify And Optimize Creative Assets

Leverage extensions and creative assets to communicate sales, savings, competitive price points and value. Consumers are looking for value, researching their options, and planning to buy fewer items.

Maximize your assets. Include vertical, square, landscape video, lifestyle and product imagery, and messaging mapped to gift-giving moments.

Repurpose top-performing UGC, influencer, and social video for use across Performance Max and Demand Gen.

### Plan Early And Flight For An Early Shopping Season

Start building momentum in late August / early September. The shopping season continues to start earlier each year.

Communicate all the ways consumers can buy (ie: e-gift messaging, BOPIS).



# Social tactics to create more intentional holiday experiences

Social users aren't searching for brands, they're searching for what to consider, and 55% of consumers prefer researching products on video or social media platforms.

*TikTok Marketing Science*



## SOCIAL TACTICS CHECKLIST

### Real Voices, Real impact! Diversify Assets to Include influencers and UGC

Test influencer content in paid social early to ID top performers, content types, and posts, then incorporate that content and those partners into holiday campaigns

Leverage creators for multi-part partnerships early with lifestyle content that entertains and inspires, then introduce campaign messaging as the season progresses.

Leverage authentic storytelling, combining short behind-the-scenes views (wrapping, store prep, team traditions) into episodic brand story moments for connection

### Take Advantage of Search on Social

More than 100 Google searches per second lead to a Reddit thread, proving that Reddit is where consumers turn for trusted, unfiltered product recommendations and advice. Take advantage of lower CPMs within new conversion products on Reddit.

Creative that best reflects search inquiries will be prioritized by social algorithms. Ensure your creative strategy aligns with the action you want consumers to take.

Lean into partnerships that have active audiences. Collaborating with creators who have high engagement rates can boost a brand's visibility in social search results.



# Affiliate tactics to create more intentional holiday experiences

Holiday is Affiliate’s Super Bowl. Looking for shortcuts to value? Affiliate is a valuable discovery and conversion drivers in Q4 given that over 70% of holiday shoppers research deals and promotions before buying.

*Google/Ipsos Holiday Shopping Study; Salesforce 2023 Holiday Report*



AFFILIATE TACTICS CHECKLIST	
Position Affiliate a Shortcut to Discovering Value	
Activate partners that consumers already trust for research (ex: Content, Review, Influencer, Editorial)	
Diversify partner mix beyond last click, especially during gift guide season and early research windows	
Optimize placement timing to show up before the deal-hunting begins	
Align messaging with consumer mindsets: simplify choice, save time and surface quality	
Leverage Affiliate as the front door to the brand, not just the final click	
Activate Aggressively with High Return Partners	
Q4 is not the time for testing. Use historical data to double down on proven partners that deliver revenue and ROI	
Get IOs and partner commitments early to secure the best pricing and avoid missing peak inventory	
Prioritize media placements with clear visibility and sales-driving potential	
Align creative/messaging with the Affiliate environment (listicles, recaps, urgency tags)	
Promos change, placements need adjusted, incremental spend needs levers ready to pull. Be ready to pivot fast with a playbook of clear guidelines for quick decision making and approvals.	



# Display tactics to create more intentional holiday experiences

Advances in technology and AI offers more personalized and engaging display ads. Stronger predictive audience targeting allows for a display experience that's more intentional than ever before.



DISPLAY TACTICS CHECKLIST	
Cut Through Banner Blindness with Interactive and Intuitive Units	
Engage with custom creative that merge video and interactive capabilities through partners such as Teads, Wunderkind, Kargo, and Yieldmo	
Use AI driven dynamic tools in tandem with Holiday contextual aware rules to build personalized ads that speak directly to shoppers' definition of "value"	
Partner with publishers who can multidimensional executions complete with high impact units, custom content and listicles, video, and/or audio, building credibility by speaking to readers in the tone and messaging they're most accustomed to	
Use Smart Signals & Tech to Identify Ready Buyers	
Provide an easy path to purchase using ACR to retarget TV/CTV viewers across second screen devices	
Maximize high intent shoppers with 2nd party shopping behavior data, CRM purchaser lookalikes, and retargeting audience pools	
Layer 1p data along with an AI powered programmatic bidder to create a fuller picture of your audience and better inform algorithmic optimizations	
Utilize in-market or location-based signals to reach active shoppers	



# Marketplace tactics to create more intentional holiday experiences

Amazon's 4-day Prime Day event in July 2025 sparked competitive momentum, priming discount-savvy shoppers for holiday deals. We expect Prime Big Deal Days to return around early to mid-October, as a 4-day event. With this extended holiday window, we expect to drive more pre-event browsing and peak conversions at the start and end.

←  
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## MARKETPLACE TACTICS CHECKLIST

### Capture the Always-On Consumer

Ramp up prospecting spend at least 2-3 weeks in advance of any tentpole event and maintain sales momentum with re-marketing investment after the event

Prioritize advertising behind deal products but don't forget to cross sell your catalog by leveraging ad units like Sponsored Display and DSP to drive visibility and consideration for full priced items

### Enhance Reporting and Targeting Capabilities with Amazon

Measure traffic driven to Amazon from alternate sources like email, influencers and social posts through Amazon Attribution

Test Amazon's AI-powered Brand+ and Performance+ orders in the DSP to drive awareness or efficiency across hyper curated audiences

### Unlock Robust Strategies with Exclusive Retail Data

Activate awareness media with bespoke audiences across unique inventory via Prime Video, Twitch, Live Sports partnerships and more to stand out in a saturated market

Use Amazon Marketing Cloud to glean cross-channel insights with SQL-based analysis, answering key business questions and activating custom audiences and 1P data signals in your ad strategy

### Ensure Content Is Retail- Ready

Refresh and update product listing content to be seasonally relevant as accurate and compelling product content can drive higher conversion both online and in-store





# Video tactics to create more intentional holiday experiences

Consumers no longer discern between digital vs traditional video formats, creating more opportunity for brands to activate impactful video at all budget levels.



## VIDEO TACTICS CHECKLIST

### Reimagine How Brands Engage With Holiday Moments

In a fragmented video landscape, sports has emerged as an opportunity to reach audiences at scale. Consider ways in through both traditional (Disney, NBC, etc.) and emerging (Amazon, YouTube, etc.) players

Work with major players to build full ecosystem experiences, reaching audiences across video formats and beyond (audio, display, influencer content, etc.)

Include sponsorships where possible, allowing a deeper connection into cultural moments

### Make Video Budget Work Harder With Varied Formats and Buy Types

Balance premium positioning and efficiencies by incorporating a combination of buy methodologies including direct, programmatic, aggregators, and local outlets

Maximize effectiveness with assets tailored to the environment and format, feature the brand early and throughout the video, and include a clear call to action as relevant

Think beyond the typical :15s or :30s, with interactive CTV units such as pause ads, vertical video, outstream, and high impact

### Drive Results by Applying Intent Based Targeting Across Video Formats

Target high intent shoppers across devices with use of 1P and retail media data activated across CTV and Online Video buys

Use pixel based and audio content recognition to retarget video viewers across devices and with various ad types, increasing messaging frequency



# Print tactics to create more intentional holiday experiences

Contrary to popular belief, print isn't just for Boomers. Nearly 1/4 of Millennials read a physical magazine or newspaper once per week\*. So, don't leave this channel off your Holiday mix.

*Attest.com 2024 US Media Consumption Report*



PRINT TACTICS CHECKLIST	
Garnet Attention In Highly Anticipated Gift Giving Guides	
Run activity in Holiday Gift Guides or along gifting editorial (print & digital versions) which are highly anticipated among readers and receive enormous PR	
Look for last minute opportunities to advertise in these issues	
Think Multi Platform Content	
Extend reach and frequency by including video, display, social, and affiliate touchpoints as part of your magazine buy	
Include QR integration to drive online response and engagement, utilizing through native storytelling, full page or spreadvetorial	
Use Newspapers for Regional Heavy Up	
Negotiate ads to run across physical and digital content	
Heavy up physical ad presence during key shopping decision timeframes, running on the weekend (higher circulation) when readers are in price comparison mode	
Stand out from clutter by ensuring ads run above the fold and request right hand read, utilizing a strong CTA	



# Audio tactics to create more intentional holiday experiences

Evoke warm holiday memories and harness shared listening experiences. Americans spend an average of 3 hours and 54 minutes daily listening to audio media in Q4, with a significant portion attributed to holiday-themed content.

Nielsen, 2024



AUDIO TACTICS CHECKLIST	
Reset, Recharge, Reconnect!	
Sponsor playlists or contextual target seasonal content and playlists that evoke a happy holiday spirit and a relaxed, feel-good vibe.	
Holiday is a time for community, work with local radio stations to sponsor community events and charities	
Turn Up the Volume Of Your Holiday Sales	
Consider running creative that authentically reflects the realities of the holiday season and offers actionable solutions or products to help ease its more challenging moments.	
Capture early-bird shoppers aiming to sidestep the holiday madness by widening your marketing window	
Use hosts and radio personalities to deliver holiday message through a real voice. Allow a flexible script so they can speak to listeners in the tone in which they're accustomed	
Use AI to stay Nimble and Flexible	
AI-generated ads enable the rapid creation of dozens of ad variations, significantly streamlining business operations and quick promotional changes	
Advanced AI personalization technology makes it easy to tailor voice and music elements to different audience segments—even when promoting the same product.	



# Direct Mail

## tactics to create more intentional holiday experiences

Studies show that direct mail inspires nearly 65% of consumers to take an action like exploring websites, visiting store locations, donating or purchasing.

←  
BACK

### DIRECT MAIL TACTICS CHECKLIST

#### An Intimate 1:1 Experience Tailored to Recipient's Preferences

Include relevant seasonal product recommendations or reference past purchases.

Provide curated gift guides and categorize them based on customer interests and prior shopping behavior. Some popular formats include mini-catalogs, look books, and gift guide catalogs.

Incorporate QR codes that lead to digital content or landing pages that are exclusive to the recipient.

Include handwritten or personalized notes expressing gratitude for customer's support and holiday wishes. Post holiday bounce backs with promotions to your December buyers can help fill the January revenue bucket and clear inventory for Spring.

#### Incentivize Shoppers to Act

Highlight exclusive deals or limited time offers with clearly visible expiration dates. Leverage Turkey 12 and consider a Black Friday/Cyber Monday Multi-Wave Countdown staggered by value tiers.

Offer follow up incentives such as a discount on their next purchase, a loyalty program, or a referral program. VIP Early Access Presale and localized drive to store sales can create early demand and excitement.

#### Real-time Capabilities Increase Relevance

Programmatic Direct Mail automates sending postal mail to recent website visitors and known customers in near real-time, maximizing recency for performance. This can be especially useful for abandon cart or browser retargeting.



# Outdoor tactics to create more intentional holiday experiences

Holiday outdoor campaigns drive +23% increase in ad recall. Over half of consumers who saw directional outdoor ads visited the retailer post-exposure.

Talon Benchmarks | OAAA/Harris Poll



## OUTDOOR TACTICS CHECKLIST

### Video and Static Ad Exposure Helps Brands Be Top of Mind

Utilize client's 1st party custom audiences to identify the right screens to reach your target consumers.	
Target audiences in high dwell environments that boast undivided attention, such as gas stations, transit, airports, EV charging stations, and more.	
Enhance user experience by including contextually relevant messaging for a more personalized ad experience. Using dynamic creative or contextual messaging is seamless.	
Implement exposed/control attribution to measure incremental performance lift across footfall, brand awareness/purchase intent, website visits, and sales.	

### Reach Shoppers On Their Path to Purchase

Explore Assembly's ShopConnect planning tool to develop strategies on how to reach Shoppers near or at point of sale of physical stores.	
Use Simon Property Group's digital and static ad platforms to reach affluent mall shoppers in top markets across the US.	
Geofence physical store locations to reach consumers when they are in the immediate vicinity of a brick-and-mortar shop.	
Leverage exposed Mobile Ad IDs (MAIDs) to retarget OOH consumers across all digital channels.	



# Tech & Innovation tactics to create more intentional holiday experiences

Technology is helping shoppers imagine life with a particular product or service. It's making the research and exploration stage of shopping fun!

AI and automation is also critical for how we plan, buy and optimize performance.



TECH & INNOVATION TACTICS CHECKLIST	
Leverage Tech to Improve Performance and ROI	
Adopt native platform innovations like Performance Max (Google), Brand+/Performance+ (Amazon) and Advantage+ (Meta) for real-time inventory, creative and budget optimization	
Implement AI algorithms to suggest personalized gifts based on recipient preference and automate gifting programs through CRM integrations	
Leverage Assembly's Performance Creative Suite to bridge media and creative through holiday-specific, audience-tailored creative variants and AI-generated assets	
Use Assembly's InsightAI to turn thousands of product reviews into actionable creative insights - transforming consumer post-purchase feedback into content that converts.	
Bring More Joy to Shopping with Immersive, Helpful and Memorable Tools	
Increase product interaction by deploying AR catalogues and 3D ad units to visualize products in real space	
Expand reach by integrating 3D model ad units for better product exploration and use QR codes to trigger immersive AR experiences in social media	
Build gamified experiences or AI-assisted gift finders to ease decision fatigue	
Lean into STAGE	
Use STAGE real time dashboards to monitor SKU-level sales, site traffic, media delivery pacing, creative fatigue	
Set decision guidelines and alerts ahead of time to make quick adjustments, for example if ROAS drops or inventory sells out, the right teams are alerted and know what to do	



# Make your list... And check it **twice!**

Download a printable and interactive  
version of our checklist below.

[\*\*DOWNLOAD NOW\*\*](#)



**+ASSEMBLY**

**THANK  
YOU**

For questions, please reach out to your Strategy, Insights & Connections, or Experience & Activation team member.