

Navigating holiday transitions and preparing for Q1

By Chris Moe, Sam Kaplan, and the Cartograph Team

Navigating transitions and soaring into Q1

December stands as the year's strongest sales month, with sustained high performance through Christmas, followed by January's emergence as a critical period for many BFY brands.

While Black Friday and Cyber Monday set a strong foundation, understanding how to maintain and leverage this momentum through the holiday-to-New Year transition is crucial for ending Q4 on a high note and riding momentum into Q1.

Here's a quick primer on how brands can manage this period and ultimately position themselves for success in January.

1. The build-up to Christmas

Shipping, delivery, and channel redirection

December maintains peak sales velocity until the 22nd, when Prime shipping deadlines for Christmas typically take effect. Leading up to this date, we encourage brands to ensure their inventory is well-stocked, their listings are optimized, and their advertising spend is strategically increased to drive visibility and conversions, leveraging Prime's fast delivery to capture holiday demand.

A few days before the guaranteed shipping cutoff, brands should implement a DTC-to-Amazon traffic diversion strategy, redirecting customers from DTC traffic to Amazon listings for faster shipping. Event-driven businesses, like party decoration brands, excel at this, effectively shifting traffic to Amazon when their DTC shipping times are too long to meet time-sensitive events like Halloween, Easter, or birthdays.

Note: DTC shipping is often only 5 business days guaranteed, especially during peak moments.

Using services like Amazon MCF (Amazon as a 3PL), which has 3-5 days shipping, is also worth exploring.

In taking this approach, you benefit from Amazon's last-minute December delivery capabilities and get an additional 1-2 days of pre-Christmas sales through strategic channel management.

2. Reframing "gifts"

Focus on holiday-themed copy, keywords, and visual ads/content so it's relevant for all the last-minute shoppers. Even for non-conventional gift categories, stating "gift" or "stocking stuffer" or photoshopping holiday decor can have real impact.

With Kosterina, during the holiday season, we sold unique "Gift Sets" and shifted ad spend to gifting keywords, resulting in 299% increase in revenue in the Bundles category in the month of November.

Second, shift your focus to digital gift cards as shipping deadlines approach. Promote how convenient they are and target last-minute shoppers who are out of ideas but still want to send something to the person they're gifting.

Messaging as simple as, "Buy a \$50 gift card, and we'll give you an extra \$5" can go a long way.

3. The quiet period (Dec 23rd-26th)

During this brief window, reduce your ad spend by 30% and focus on the bare essentials, such as using Sponsored Brand Videos or targeted remarketing campaigns to focus on brand awareness and engagement without spending excessively.

Regarding ad spend, we utilize tools like Perpetua because they give you real-time adjustments on bids and budgets, which makes life easier. The key is to keep your costs manageable, because you want to save that ammo to ramp up spend in January.



Several popular non-alcoholic brands on Amazon poised for a significant sales surge in January.

4. The January surge

January represents the most significant sales period for many of our brands in the Better-For-You space, with a six-week surge that begins right after New Year's Day.

Typically we see slight "new years resolution uplift" starting Dec 27-30, with a lull 31-1st right before the surge begins.

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The January surge cont'd

Here are a few ways to work with this momentum

1. Align messaging with consumer goals

- Develop campaigns that target fitness, wellness, and other common New Year themes. Use loyalty programs and remarketing to engage and retain customers who purchase during the holiday season.
- Make sure your product listings and keywords are themed for resolutions, health, and wellness, like the way non-alcoholic brands position their messaging at the beginning of each Q1.

2. Build your retention strategy

- Implement DSP remarketing and loyalty programs to convert one-time buyers into repeat customers.
- Promote Subscribe & Save options post-holiday to lock in repeat buyers.
- Use Sponsored Display and DSP to remarket to holiday shoppers and create personalized follow-up campaigns.

3. Loyalty, loyalty, loyalty

- Use tools like "Manage Your Customer Engagement" to follow up with promotions or customized product recommendations.
- Introduce cross-sell and upsell strategies, targeting past purchasers with complementary products or upgrades.
- Leverage New Year-themed messaging to keep customers engaged and coming back for more.

Wrapping up

The holiday-to-New Year transition is a great opportunity to bridge two high-performing sales periods. Success requires precise execution of shipping strategies through late December, followed by aggressive positioning for January's BFY surge.

By maintaining operational excellence through December 22nd and pivoting quickly to capture January's momentum, brands can maximize performance across both critical sales periods. For BFY brands specifically, this isn't about managing a slowdown—it's about optimizing the transition between two peak seasons.

With proper planning and execution, brands can maintain strong December performance while positioning themselves for January's significant opportunities in the wellness space.

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If you have any questions, or would like to discuss your brand approach on Amazon, please feel free to reach out. We're always happy to chat, and offer a free audit of any Amazon strategy.

Get in touch here:

contact@gocartograph.com



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