

2025 Holiday Marketing Guide



Key Dates, Retail Themes, Shipping Deadlines,
and Monthly To-Dos for the Holiday Season.

09 2025 September

 HOLIDAY CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1 	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22  	23	24	25	26	27 
28	29	30	1	2	3	4

Key Dates:

- 1:** Labor Day
- 11:** Patriot Day
- 22:** First Day of Fall
- 22:** Rosh Hashanah
- 27:** World Tourism Day

Common Retail Themes

- Back-to-school
- National Hispanic Heritage Month
(Sept 15-Oct 15)
- Oktoberfest

□ **Focus on acquisition to build your lists**

Implement new subscription strategies across as many channels as possible, prioritizing both email and SMS opt-in. Leverage two-step popups, landing pages and forms, checkboxes at checkout, and more.

□ **Perform list hygiene to remove inactive subscribers**

Combine this with running a re-engagement campaign to revitalize subscribers that have been disengaged the past several months, increasing your holiday reach.

□ **Implement new/optimize existing automated campaigns to build up cross-channel traffic**

Think: Welcome Series, Browse Abandonment, Shopping Cart Abandonment, Post Purchase, Alerts Suite, Recurring Automated Campaigns, and Transactional Campaigns. Leverage both email and text messages within for maximum reach.

□ **Notify subscribers of increased sends through the holiday season**

Promote an opt-down page for those who aren't looking to receive more messages.

Messaging

□ **Set the framework for broadcast messaging calendars for the rest of the year**

- Plan for 'oops' messages, confirm shipping deadlines with your procurement team, set your promo/sale calendars, etc.
- Consider updating the "From Name" for seasonal sends (ex. [Retailer's Name] Holiday Deals).

□ **Implement transactional messaging**

Collect opt-in for transactional messaging during the checkout process and begin triggering order, shipping, and delivery confirmations via text and email to build up channel awareness. Consider applying a pre-check to the existing email subscription opt-in box found in the webstore checkout flow.

□ **Begin increasing broadcast frequency**

Target two full-list email sends a week and send additional broadcasts with activity-based segmentation. Additionally, send two full-list text messages a week and leverage similar activity-based segmentation for additional campaigns.

□ **Build audiences using AI capabilities**

- E.g. Contacts most likely to purchase; that group should be contained in almost every message the rest of the year.
- For some supplemental messaging, suppress "most likely to unsubscribe" contacts to ensure they are still on the list for key send days that historically drive the most revenue (especially if they've previously purchased).

□ **Begin monitoring inbound messaging in Two-Way SMS Conversations console**

Understand what types of questions and issues your subscribers have to inform plans and other teams. Integrate with your customer service platform or manage directly within your Listrak account.

Audits

□ **Perform technical audit of program**

Confirm all subscription points are functioning, validate conversion tracking, ensure browsing and cart tracking is in place, and test transactional and automated campaign triggering prior to any code freeze windows.

□ **Perform competitive audit**

Evaluate competitors' promotional discount usage, campaign approach, and overall strategy. Study your competitors' emails and text messages to see what buzzwords and offers work best.

□ **Perform audit of last year's holiday performance**

Review top-performing campaigns for copy, timing, and strategy trends and identify messages that did not produce engagement or revenue.

□ **Perform compliance audit of Text Message Marketing program**

Review your SMS opt-in calls to action for compliance requirements, including proper disclaimer language. Additionally, confirm your System Messages have accurate contact information for HELP and INFO.

□ **Create saved content blocks promoting payment options**

If you offer financing through a store credit card or partnership with AfterPay, Sezzle, etc., create a saved content block that can be used throughout all your messaging. Confirm any legal terminology that may need to be included. Promote gift cards in all marketing messages, as well.

□ **Coupon check**

Double check your unique coupon pool setup to ensure they're full and that the threshold notifications are configured to be sent to the correct contacts for when they get low.

□ **Review dynamic product recommendation logic**

Make any needed updates before larger volume and key send dates.

Design

□ **Build out holiday campaign ideas**

Start prepping creative to have a holiday look and feel that is on-brand yet captures the holiday spirit for all winter holidays, not just Christmas. Here are a few tips & tricks:

- If you use a holiday palette, make sure it's harmonious with your brand colors. Don't think you have to stick with red and green!
- Make sure to keep holiday design consistent for brand awareness. (Consider updating all evergreen campaigns with holiday branding for this period, too.)
- Sometimes less is more— small holiday touches and details go along way. Don't send your customers into sensory overload.

□ **Utilize saved content**

Build elements that will be used frequently within saved content so they can be easily added into campaigns and updated (e.g., holiday headers & footers, shipping updates, promotions, etc.).

□ **Quality Testing**

- Test marketing templates or updates to ensure they are mobile-friendly and render correctly across devices.
- Design and build for dark mode and accessibility.

□ **A/B split test email & SMS message content strategies**

If you haven't already, start figuring out what resonates best with your audience. Does using first-name personalization increase your open rates? What gets the best conversion rate: SMS or MMS? Does "my" or "your" language get the best engagement in your calls to action?

10 2025 October

 HOLIDAY CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	1 	2 	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13  	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31 	1

Key Dates:

- 1-2:** Yom Kippur
- 13:** Indigenous Peoples' Day/
Columbus Day
- 13:** Canadian Thanksgiving
- 20:** Diwali
- 31:** Halloween

Common Retail Themes

- Breast Cancer Awareness
- LGBTQ+ History Month
- Fall Flavors: Pumpkin Spice
- Halloween

Big Box Promos

- Prime Big Deal Days
- Walmart Deals Holiday Kickoff
- Target's Bi-annual Circle Week

❑ **Continue testing and program auditing**

Consider adjusting the cadence of when pop-ups appear to visitors that didn't originally submit their email address or phone number. Implement subsequent sticky button and exit-intent popups to acquire more contacts later in their browsing sessions.

❑ **Check and adjust frequency caps to allow for increased sending cadence**

This should include weekend sends. Be sure to monitor your list health and the amount of unsubscribes, and maintain mobile compliance with no more than three text messages sent per 24 hours.

❑ **Unsubscribe true "dead weight" contacts**

These contacts should be identified from your re-engagement campaign and should either be unsubscribed or messaged with "winback" type marketing only. Also look to do a soft bounce clean-up.

❑ **Review Alerts settings and thresholds and update to ensure you are optimizing these triggers as much as possible.**

❑ **Set the framework for broadcast messaging calendars for the rest of the year**

- Discounts will be on full display in 2025 – don't hold your best offerings until Black Friday or Cyber Monday because shoppers are buying earlier every year.
- Prep product recommendations and merch block recipes for holiday-specific categories or gift guides.
- Personalize with focus on categories they've purchased or browsed before.
- Update message navigation/headers to account for holiday look/categories.
- Focus on email creative templates that give clear gifting options based on price (ex. Our favorite gifts under \$50).
- Start pushing gift guides – guides based on gender, age group, price points, and/or categories (e.g., "For the gamer in your life" or "For the best chef you know").
- Use urgency within your messaging.
- Create one-off segmentation for holiday-specific audiences that look to leverage holiday purchasers from years past (i.e. Holiday purchasers over the past 3 years).

- Review post purchase and transactional messages to fit your Black Friday & Cyber Monday strategy – add/remove incentives, include important shipping updates, build your SMS list, etc.
- Develop strategies across multiple channels – when to send emails vs. SMS vs. Browser Push notifications vs. App Push notifications.
- Ensure social channels are updated on the top-selling products and seasonal "must haves."
- Build video content that can be used in reels or on TikTok for subscribers that are primarily social media users.

11 2025 November

 HOLIDAY CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1 
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11  	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22 
23 	24	25	26	27 	28 	29 
30 	1	2	3	4	5	6

Key Dates:

1: Diwali
11: Veterans Day
11: Singles' Day
22/23: Friendsgiving
27: Thanksgiving
28: Black Friday
29: Small Business Saturday
30: Artists Sunday

Common Retail Themes

Gratitude and Community
Holiday Shopping Kickoff
Celebrating Veterans
Supporting Small Businesses
Early Christmas Season
Movember
Focus on Sustainability
Experiential Retail
Personalization (Gift Guides)

Big Box Promos

Walmart's Deals for Days
Amazon Cyber Week

❑ **Target full-list broadcasts as much as possible**

Schedule messages outside of the top or bottom of each hour (ex. Rather than sending at 10am, deploy the message at 10:07am); this will help avoid inbox placement at the same time as many others.

❑ **Stay Compliant with your SMS sends**

Avoid sending during regulated “quiet hours” to maintain compliance and engagement.

❑ **Coordinate marketing efforts across all channels**

Align mobile, email, and social to reinforce messaging and extend reach.

❑ **Have ‘oops’ messages built and ready**

Draft ‘oops’ message copy for major sales + Black Friday, Cyber Monday/Week, Super Saturday, shipping deadlines, website errors, etc.

❑ **Promote exclusive SMS-only or app-only sales in email, with signup for additional channels**

❑ **Promote your loyalty program**

Take advantage of the influx of traffic and consider running a special offer for those who join your loyalty program during Black Friday or Cyber Monday. You may even make this a recurring weekly campaign for new subscribers who aren’t signed up.

12 2025 December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3

Key Dates:

- 1:** Cyber Monday
- 2:** Giving Tuesday
- 8:** Green Monday
- 14:** National Free Shipping Day
- 14-22:** Hanukkah
- 20:** Super Saturday, Last-Minute Deals
- 21:** First Day of Winter
- 24:** Christmas Eve
- 25:** Christmas
- 26:** Boxing Day
- 26-1/1:** Kwanzaa
- 31:** New Year's Eve

Common Retail Themes

- Early Shopping
- Deal Seeking
- Online Marketplaces
- Mobile Shopping
- Value & Sustainability

Shipping & Deadlines

- 14:** USPS Ground Advantage First-Class Mail
- 16:** USPS Priority Mail
- 19:** UPS 3-Day Select Shipping
- 20:** USPS Priority Mail Express
- 20:** UPS 2-Day Air Shipping
- 22:** UPS Next Day Air Shipping

❑ **Continue sending broadcasts past peak shopping days**

Do not drop off in send cadence. Target two full-list email and SMS sends a week. Send additional broadcasts messages with activity-based segmentation.

❑ **Continue to highlight shipping dates and deadlines as well as social campaigns from November**

❑ **Promote Gift Cards to last-minute shoppers**

❑ **Promote self-gifting or “treat yourself”**

❑ **Promote reasons to experience your brick & mortar store(s)**

As ecommerce shipping windows close to deliver in time for Christmas, highlight your store locator, extended holiday hours, BOPIS, in-store events, etc.

❑ **12 Days till Christmas Campaign**

This creative campaign is still successful – and provides you the opportunity to highlight individual products for 12 straight days; in some cases to help lower inventory levels.

❑ **Close the 2025 Year**

Consider a year-in-review wrap-up campaign to engage consumers. These types of campaigns tend to get a lot of engagement. Highlight your 2025 success in a fun, engaging manner:

- Highlight your most popular content (e.g., most read blogs, favorite recipes, top social media posts, etc.).
- Show your goodwill and environmental impact (e.g., money donated, trees planted, % of materials that were recyclable, etc.).
- Dynamically pull in stats for the consumer (e.g., how many purchases they made, what their favorite order was, how long they biked, their top reviewed styles, etc.).
- Celebrate any changes to your brand (e.g., new stores, new product lines, new partners, etc.).

❑ **Make updates for 2026**

Think: new coupon pools for evergreen incentives, updated creative on annual campaigns like Birthday, Loyalty, Anniversary, Post Purchase, etc.

01 2026 January

 HOLIDAY CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	31	1   	2 	3 
4 	5 	6 	7 	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 
18	19 	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Key Dates

Jan 1: New Year's Day

Jan 1: Kwanzaa Ends

Jan 1-7: New Year's Resolutions Week

Jan 17: National Use Your Gift Card Day

Jan 19: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Common Retail Themes

New Year's Resolutions

Clearance Sales

Dry January

Veganuary

❑ **Update evergreen campaigns that had holiday messaging**

You may need to remove shipping banners or any mention of the holidays. Perform an audit on your website as well to take down holiday-related content.

❑ **Review automated campaigns that had holiday changes**

Perform an audit on your automated messages to ensure any shortened wait steps or changes in coupon distribution have been updated back to their previous formats.

❑ **Export campaign performance data and conduct a post-season audit**

Review for post-holiday optimization opportunities and keep learnings on hand for when you start planning for holiday 2026.

❑ **Foster those who purchased during the holidays**

- Promote your easy return policies.
- Use predictive content to deliver product use guides and other relevant content based on what they purchased.
- Request, and then promote, product reviews.
- Promote your social media channels so they'll stay in touch and tag their purchases for additional user-generated content.

❑ **Build out post-holiday campaigns to engage post-holiday buyers**

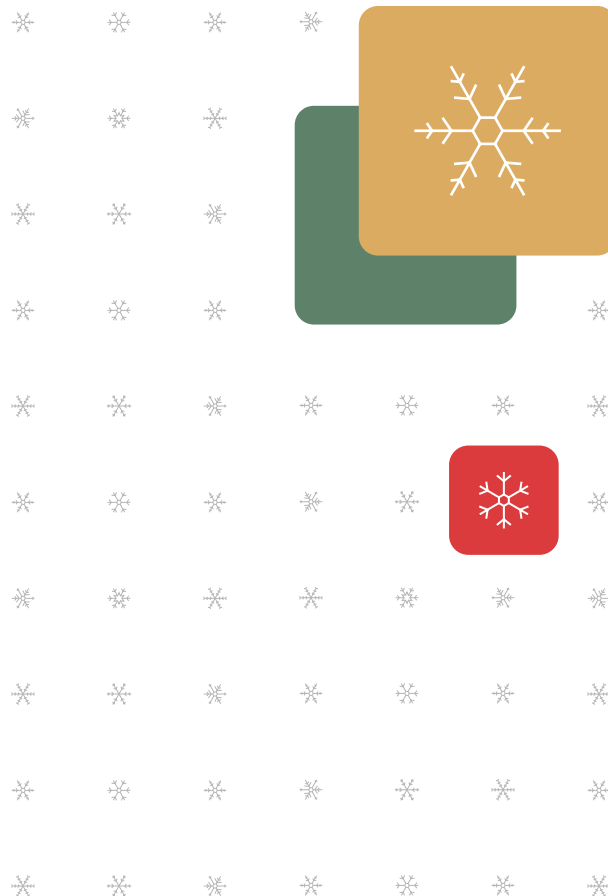
- Send deep discounts to holiday abandoners.
- Implement the user-generated content you've gathered throughout the season.
- Offer BOGO promotions to clear out excess inventory.
- Promote gift card redemption and remind customers who purchase gift cards that they have them.

Season of Success

With the right strategy and a partner who understands the pace and pressure of Holiday 2025, this season can be your most successful yet.

Shoppers are moving fast, value is driving decisions, and digital and mobile channels are more important than ever. Use this monthly marketing guide to plan with purpose, execute with confidence, and maximize impact from August through January.

Visit Listrak's [Holiday Resource Center](#) for more tools and insights to succeed this season.



About Listrak

Listrak is the person-first marketing automation platform that seamlessly integrates data, identity, and cross-channel messaging to power hyper-personalized customer experiences. Built for leading retailers and brands, Listrak's email, mobile marketing, push, and web solutions drive growth, maximize efficiency, and deliver exceptional revenue results. For more information, visit listrak.com