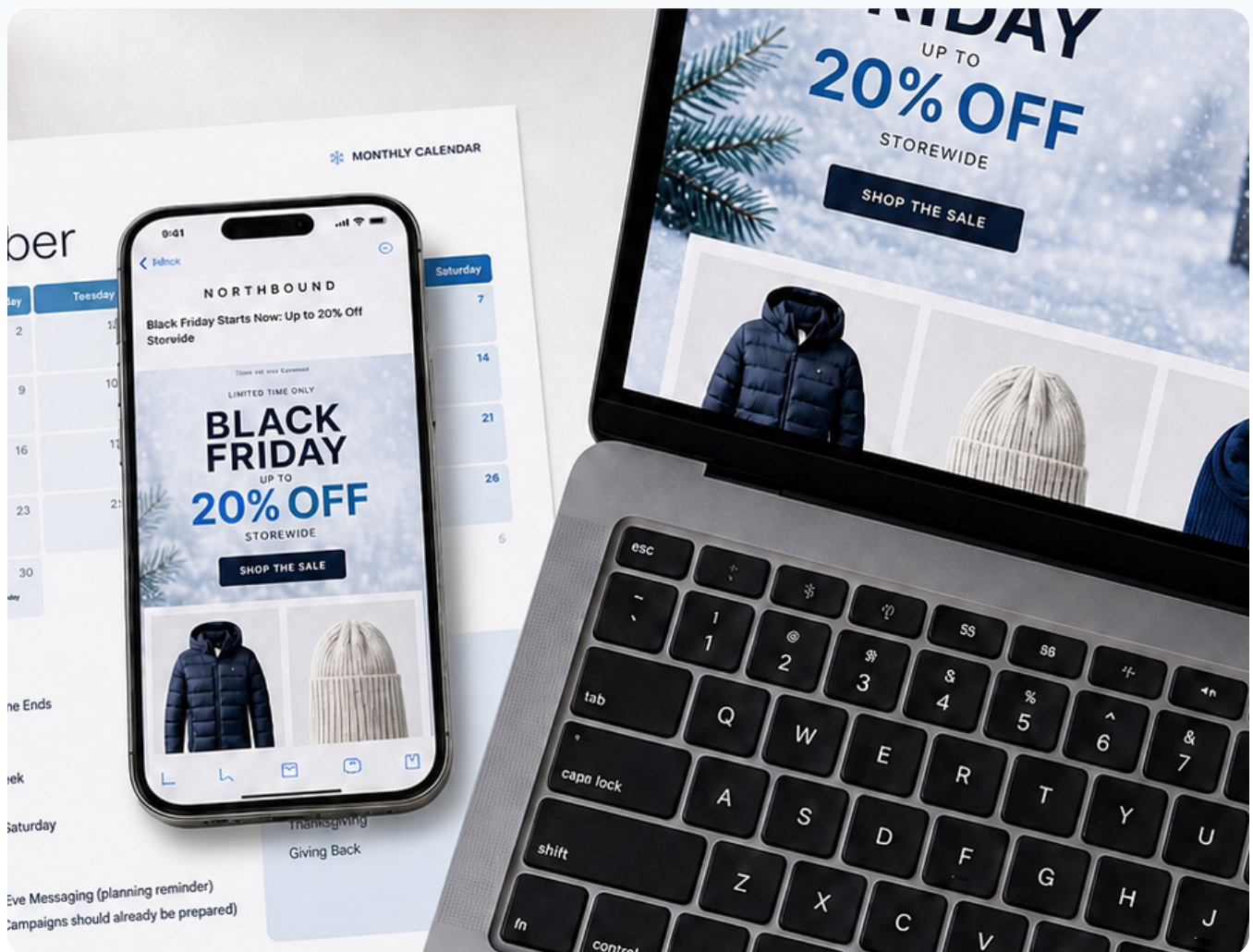


2026 Holiday Marketing Guide



Your holiday playbook for key dates, retail themes, shipping deadlines, and monthly marketing priorities.



2026 September

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

Key Dates

Aug 29 - Sep 7: Labor Day Weekend Sales

Sep 7: Labor Day

Sep 11: Patriot Day

Sep 11-13: Rosh Hashanah

Sep 15 - Oct 15: National Hispanic Heritage Month

Sep 22: First Day of Fall

Sep 27: World Tourism Day

Sep 29: National Coffee Day

Sep 30: Quarter-End Planning Deadline

Common Retail Themes

Back-to-School

Fall Favorites

Oktoberfest

National Hispanic Heritage Month

Fashion Week Coverage



Listrak Perspective

September is where successful holiday seasons begin. Before promotional calendars fill up, focus on strengthening your customer data, optimizing automation, and building the audiences you'll rely on during peak shopping months. The work you do now will determine how effectively you can personalize campaigns when holiday demand accelerates.

Acquisition & Program Readiness

- Focus on subscriber acquisition across email and SMS
- Perform list hygiene and launch re-engagement campaigns
- Complete an inbox placement and deliverability review
- Warm IPs and sending domains if holiday volume will increase
- Review unsubscribe, complaint, and suppression trends
- Validate integrations, APIs, and customer data feeds

Messaging & Automation

- Review and optimize automated campaigns, including:
 - Welcome Series
 - Browse Abandonment
 - Cart Abandonment
 - Post Purchase
 - Price Drop & Back-in-Stock Alerts
 - Transactional Messaging
- Notify subscribers about increased holiday send frequency
- Promote your preference center and opt-down options
- Build your holiday broadcast calendar through January
- Begin increasing email and SMS/RCS broadcast cadence
- Implement or expand transactional email and SMS/RCS messaging

Audience Strategy & Personalization

- Build predictive holiday audiences
- Create gift guide audiences
- Identify likely holiday purchasers
- Build high-value customer audiences
- Create win-back audiences ahead of peak traffic

Audits & Optimization

- Review last year's holiday performance
- Complete a technical audit
- Complete an SMS compliance audit
- Perform a competitive audit
- Validate coupon pools and promotional logic
- Review dynamic product recommendations

Creative & Campaign Planning

- Begin developing holiday creative concepts
- Develop and merchandise holiday gift guides
- Build reusable content blocks for holiday campaigns
- Create payment, financing, shipping, and gift card content blocks
- Quality test templates across devices, dark mode, and accessibility
- A/B test email and SMS/RCS messaging strategies



2026 October

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

Key Dates

Early Oct: National Retail Federation Holiday Forecast Release

Oct 1-31: Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Oct 1: Q4 Begins

Oct 12: Indigenous Peoples' Day / Columbus Day

Oct 12: Canadian Thanksgiving

Mid Oct: Early Holiday Shopping Campaigns Launch

Oct 16: Boss's Day

Oct 31: Halloween

Common Retail Themes

Holiday Gift Guides

Early Holiday Shopping

Halloween

Cozy Season

Fall Fashion & Home

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Prime Day (likely Oct 6-8)



Listrak Perspective

October is your last opportunity to prepare before holiday demand accelerates. With early holiday shopping campaigns beginning to launch, now is the time to finalize campaigns, validate every customer journey, and test every experience. The more you can automate, QA, and optimize now, the more time you'll have to maximize revenue during the busiest shopping weeks.

Acquisition & Program Readiness

- Continue subscriber acquisition across email and SMS
- Monitor inbox placement and sender reputation as send volume increases
- Review audience refresh schedules
- Validate website forms, popups, and acquisition experiences

Messaging & Automation

- Finalize your holiday campaign calendar
- Establish your holiday SMS send calendar, incorporating RCS
- Confirm SMS send volume and budget
- Load test triggered campaigns
- Prepare inventory, shipping, and BOPIS messaging
- Create an SMS compliance review process

Audience Strategy & Personalization

- Validate holiday predictive audiences
- Build SMS-exclusive holiday audiences
- Test holiday segmentation logic
- Activate personalized gift guides
- Review dynamic audience refresh schedules

Audits & Optimization

- Complete end-to-end QA across email, SMS, and onsite experiences
- Validate dynamic content
- Confirm coupon pool inventory
- Review landing pages, links, and promotional codes
- Test email and SMS/RCS rendering across devices, dark mode, and accessibility

Creative & Campaign Planning

- Finalize holiday creative assets
- Complete campaign approvals
- Prepare Black Friday and Cyber Monday creative
- Build shipping, BOPIS, and gift card messaging assets
- Finalize reusable content blocks and templates



Before You Move On...

Before November arrives, every major campaign, audience, automation, and customer experience should be finalized. Complete this checklist now so your team can spend peak season optimizing performance instead of fixing preventable issues.

Program Readiness

- ☐ Deliverability audit complete
- ☐ SMS compliance audit complete
- ☐ Segments validated

Campaign Readiness

- ☐ Triggered campaigns tested
- ☐ Coupon pools validated
- ☐ Dynamic content validated

Merchandizing & Operations

- ☐ Gift guides published
- ☐ Shipping deadlines loaded
- ☐ BOPIS messaging ready

Final QA

- ☐ Templates tested
- ☐ Links verified
- ☐ Landing pages approved
- ☐ January retention campaigns prepared



2026

November

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

Key Dates

- Nov 1:** Daylight Saving Time Ends
- Nov 8:** DiWali
- Nov 11:** Veterans Day
- Nov 11:** Singles Day
- Nov 26:** Thanksgiving
- Nov 27 - Dec 1:** Cyber Week
- Nov 27:** Black Friday
- Nov 28:** Small Business Saturday
- Nov 29:** Cyber Sunday
- Nov 29:** Cyber Monday Eve Messaging (planning reminder)
- Nov 30:** Cyber Monday
- Dec 1:** Giving Tuesday (campaigns should already be prepared)

Common Retail Themes

- Black Friday
- Cyber Week
- Holiday Gifting
- Small Business Saturday
- Thanksgiving
- Giving Back



Listrak Perspective

November is when preparation turns into performance. Your campaigns are live, shoppers are actively researching and buying, and every interaction matters. Monitor performance, optimize in real time, and adapt messaging as customer behavior and inventory evolve throughout Cyber Week.

Campaign Execution

- Execute your holiday messaging calendar
- Monitor campaign performance throughout the day
- Scale triggered campaigns as volume increases
- Prepare Cyber Monday and Giving Tuesday sends

Personalization & Customer Experience

- Refresh product recommendations
- Deliver dynamic gift recommendations
- Activate dynamic inventory messaging
- Personalize shipping countdowns
- Optimize audience performance in real time

Operations & Performance

- Monitor inbox placement and deliverability
- Validate inventory, product feeds, and carrier capacity
- Activate inventory-triggered messaging
- Monitor website performance and conversion paths
- Test BOPIS and curbside pickup experiences
- Monitor promotional pricing and coupon performance

SMS & Mobile

- Monitor SMS performance and engagement
- Scale cart abandonment SMS
- Monitor keyword responses
- Ensure two-way SMS staffing and response workflows are ready
- Optimize SMS/RCS sends based on engagement and performance

Holiday Planning

- Finalize shipping deadline campaigns
- Prepare Giving Tuesday creative
- Build post-Cyber Week campaigns
- Prepare December promotional messaging



2026

December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	1	2	3	4 Hanukkah Begins	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Hanukkah Ends
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 First Day of Winter	22	23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26 Kwanzaa Begins Boxing Day
27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	1	2

Key Dates

- Dec 1:** Giving Tuesday
- Dec 4-12:** Hanukkah
- Dec 7:** Green Monday
- Dec 14:** National Free Shipping Day
- Dec 14:** Standard Shipping Cutoff Window Begins
- Dec 18:** Expedited Shipping Cutoff Window Begins
- Dec 21:** First Day of Winter
- Dec 24:** Christmas Eve
- Dec 25:** Christmas Day
- Dec 26:** Kwanzaa Begins
- Dec 26:** Boxing Day
- Dec 26:** Gift Card Redemption Begins
- Dec 31:** New Year's Eve

Common Retail Themes

- 10 Days of Holiday Gifting
- Last-Minute Gifting
- Shipping Deadlines
- Buy Online, Pick Up In Store (BOPIS)
- Gift Cards
- Year-End Sales
- Holiday Returns



Listrak Perspective

December is where agility becomes a competitive advantage. Monitor performance daily, adjust campaigns as fulfillment windows change, and personalize every interaction based on customer intent. From shipping deadlines and BOPIS to gift cards and year-end promotions, timely, relevant messaging keeps shoppers engaged through the final days of the holiday season.

Campaign Execution

- Update campaigns as shipping deadlines change
- Prepare post-Christmas and year-end promotions
- Transition messaging from promotional offers to shipping deadlines, BOPIS, and gift cards

Personalization & Customer Experience

- Promote gift cards after shipping cutoffs
- Personalize last-minute gift recommendations
- Highlight inventory availability and fulfillment options
- Highlight curated gift collections, such as Gifts for Him, Gifts for Her, and Gifts Under \$50
- Prepare return and exchange messaging
- Develop post-purchase cross-sell campaigns



2027 January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	 New Year's Day Kwanzaa Ends	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

Key Dates

Jan 1: New Year's Day

Jan 1: Kwanzaa Ends

Jan 18: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Mid Jan: Winter Clearance Events

Late Jan: Valentine's Day Campaigns Begin

Common Retail Themes

Winter Clearance
 Returns & Exchanges
 Gift Card Redemption
 Health & Wellness
 Organization & Home Refresh
 Valentine's Day



January:

 MONTHLY FOCUS

Turn Holiday Shoppers into Loyal Customers

Listrak Perspective

The holiday season may be over, but your newest customers are just getting started. January is your opportunity to turn holiday shoppers into loyal customers by building on the relationships you created during peak season. Use purchase behavior, engagement data, and customer preferences to deliver personalized follow-up campaigns, encourage repeat purchases, and strengthen long-term loyalty.

Customer Retention & Loyalty

- Welcome and nurture first-time holiday buyers
- Encourage second purchases with personalized offers
- Promote loyalty program enrollment and member-exclusive offers
- Identify high-value customers for VIP experiences

Performance & Planning

- Analyze holiday campaign performance
- Document key insights and optimization opportunities
- Refresh creative and promotional calendars for Q1
- Begin planning Valentine's Day campaigns

Messaging & Automation

- Launch gift card redemption campaigns
- Implement return and exchange journeys
- Optimize post-purchase messaging
- Refresh seasonal automations for Q1

Audience Strategy & Personalization

- Build repeat purchase audiences
- Personalize recommendations based on holiday purchases
- Create win-back audiences for one-time holiday shoppers
- Identify customers ready for cross-sell and upsell campaigns

