



# 'TIS THE SEASON FOR CREATIVE

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Tips and tricks **for success**  
during the holiday season



## *Introduction*

# The countdown to conversion

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The shopping frenzy is about to begin, and marketers are racing to grab their slice of the holiday pie. With global ad spend projected to rise [7.4% to reach \\$1.17 trillion by the end of this year](#), the question is: how can your brand stand out among the flurry of festive ads?

The answer: smart creative and formats that blend interactivity, personalization, and intelligence to reach consumers where they are with the messages that truly resonate.

This “mini guide” unwraps creative and messaging best practices to help you craft scroll-stopping, cart-filling creative this holiday season.



# 01

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## *Interactivity*

**Make the most  
of viewing time**

## Did you know?

Streaming accounted for a record [43.4%](#) of total TV watch time in December 2024, with Christmas Day marking the [most-streamed day](#) in TV history.

## The takeaway

### Lean into “holiday viewing” behavior.

The holidays are a time for streaming together, from sports to binge—worthy shows to seasonal specials and movies. Your ads should feel made for the moment—part of the celebration, not an interruption.



## Creative ideas



### Shoppable experiences

Feature [shoppable ads](#) on TV and mobile that feature trending holiday content, or products that can be used in conjunction with viewing, like snacks or blankets.



### Include a QR code

Add a scannable code that takes viewers directly to curated holiday pages.



### Micro stories

Use short, emotive storytelling moments to draw viewers in before prompting action with an interactive element. Think a quick reaction to opening a gift or sharing a laugh during a holiday movie night.



### Interactivity

Use QR codes to make it seamless for viewers to shop straight from their TV screens. Ensure your QR code is visible for at least 5-7 seconds so viewers have time to scan, especially during slower or more emotional storytelling moments.





# 02

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## *Messaging strategy*

**Design for relevance  
and results**



## Did you know?

Energizer's recent holiday campaign used Innovid-powered shoppable CTV ads to connect with consumers at key holiday moments—delivering the right message, on the right screen, when it mattered most. The team tapped into contextual targeting across Target.com for toys, entertainment, and electronics, paired with brand and category search terms to reach the most relevant guests as they browsed. The results included a **12x higher YoY sales lift**, an **18% stronger ROAS** vs. standard ad formats, and a **7% overall sales lift** from its omnichannel mix.

## The takeaway

### Relevance drives results.

When creative and targeting work together—aligning messages to what shoppers actually need, in the exact context where they're shopping—brands turn awareness into action. Energizer's success proves that smart audience strategies transform even simple holiday reminders into meaningful conversions.

## Creative ideas



### Align message to mindset

Adapt copy and visuals to reflect where consumers are in their holiday journeys. Are they early planners or last-minute shoppers?



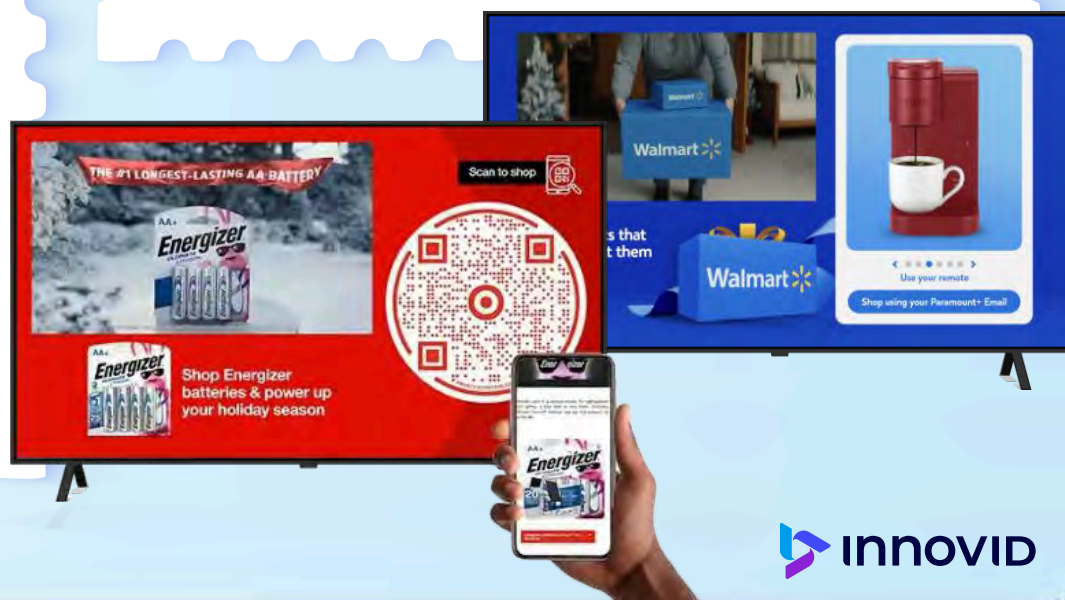
### Connect channels

Keep messaging consistent across CTV, social, retail media, and even linear so consumers recognize your brand wherever they watch.



### Highlight utility

Showcase how your product fits into seasonal needs and rituals. (Energizer spotlighted how its battery packs powered the holidays' most popular toys.)





# 03

## *Real-time data*

**Leverage context  
and timing to  
maximize impact**





## Did you know?

Adapting creative based on real-time context signals has been shown to drive short-term sales jumps up to **7.4x** and **long-term gains up to 2.7x**, according to industry research. **Lowe's brought that to life** by using dynamic video overlays to deliver time-sensitive creative—updating promotional messages, seasonal offers, and CTAs in real time. The results were a **217% lift in conversion rate**, **118% higher CTR**, and a **214% increase in revenue** per thousand impressions vs. static creative.

## The takeaway

### Timing is everything.

Whether it's snow in the forecast, a flash sale, or the final days before Christmas delivery cutoffs, real-time creative ensures your message always fits the moment. Dynamic optimization lets brands react instantly to shifting conditions, turning context into conversions.

## Creative ideas

### 🎀 Limited-time deals

For offers that are time-limited, or revolve around a specific event or holiday, add a ticking sound or visual countdown to build urgency and encourage action before time is up.

### 🎀 Weather or time of day

Tap into the current weather or time to serve ads that align with the moment. Think “cozy-up” messages for cold nights or “morning pick-me-up” offers during early hours.

### 🎀 Smart sequencing

Update creatives mid-campaign to continuously reflect inventory, promotions, or trending products.







# 04

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## *Live events*

**Tap into viewership  
of seasonal sports  
events**



## Did you know?

In 2024, 5.25 million viewers tuned into the [NBA's Christmas Day game](#) in the U.S., marking its most watched Christmas Day in five years, and an 84% increase in viewership compared to the previous year. As more major matchups and other live events stream across CTV, these moments are becoming some of the most engaged, co-viewed environments for marketers.

## The takeaway

### Sports brings people together.

This makes them the [perfect moments for brands to connect with audiences at scale](#).

Tap into the excitement and massive reach of seasonal live events by building anticipation ahead of time, running countdowns to major matchups, or showcasing products that elevate the viewing experience. Turn fandom into measurable impact.

## Creative ideas

### ✧ Countdown to kickoff

Feature the top upcoming game dates and times to build hype and drive engagement. For those who can't tune in the day-of, consider creative that enables them to add an upcoming game to their watch list or save for later.

### ✧ Real-time rewards

Trigger promotions tied to outcomes, like a 15% off win-day discount or free delivery after a tough loss.

### ✧ Amplify the moment

Partner with creators or influencers who can extend your live-event message beyond the screen, keeping the conversation going across social channels.

### ✧ Post-game deals

Keep the momentum going with deals or promos that recap the action and drive repeat interactions.





*Bringing it all together*

# The naughty and nice list

*(Be sure to check it twice!)*

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The best holiday creative doesn't just convert, it connects. Spark joy with moments that make people smile, laugh, or feel something genuine—then guide those feelings toward action. The holidays are the busiest and brightest time of year for marketers, and with every impression counting, it's worth double-checking your creative approach to make sure your campaigns land on the “nice” list.

## Look + feel



### Nice

- ✓ Ensure your brand is **clearly positioned early** (ideally in the first 3 seconds)
- ✓ Don't shy away from **sound, motion, and festive visuals** to capture attention
- ✓ Keep it **clean and easy** to follow on all screens

### Naughty

- ✗ **Hiding your logo or brand** reveal until the end
- ✗ **Forgetting to weave in seasonal context** or subtle holiday cues

## Interactivity + timing



### Nice

- ✓ Keep QR codes or shoppable prompts **on screen long enough** (5-7 seconds)
- ✓ For carousels, images should show for **at least 2 seconds**
- ✓ Make **interactive elements intuitive**—show a remote, cursor, or swipe animation so viewers know what to do

### Naughty

- ✗ **Overloading screens** with too many touchpoints or text; that will drain attention and waste time
- ✗ **Overcomplicating interactive elements**, making viewers guess how to engage





# Language + CTAs

## Nice

- ✓ Use **CTAs that encourage action** (i.e. “Add to cart,” “Order now,” “Find your gift”)
- ✓ Keep copy **short and sweet!**  
The season is busy enough without long reads

## Naughty

- ✗ Forgetting that **imagery can be a CTA**—not using icons, motion, and cues to drive action
- ✗ Relying on **generic language** (i.e. “Learn more”) when your audience is ready to buy



# Specs

## Nice

- ✓ Use **high-resolution** images and video
- ✓ **Test across devices** to make sure your creative looks good everywhere

## Naughty

- ✗ Letting **QR codes fall below 400x400 px**—that’s far too small!
- ✗ Uploading **without double-checking** creative specs or safe zones



# Ready to *unwrap* your potential?

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With the holiday season practically here, it's time for your campaigns to shine. Make the most of your strategy this year and prepare for next year with the right solutions. For more on the top strategies marketers can use to drive conversions around Black Friday and beyond, read our [article on tactics that work, and how you can use them today.](#)

For more tips, tricks, and creative best practices, visit [www.innovid.com](http://www.innovid.com).

