

AI Sparks

Cutting through the AI hype with one clear insight each week

One Holiday. Three Shopping Seasons.

For almost two decades, we have studied how Americans shop during the Holidays. This year, we believe something fundamental is changing. There is no longer one Holiday shopping season. There are three.

1. Considered Shopping: Research. Compare. Watch. Buy.
2. Peak Shopping: Buy. Gift. Convert. Deliver.
3. Me-Buy: Return. Redeem. Upgrade. Indulge.

What is driving this evolution? There are several factors, but AI may be emerging as an important catalyst. AI shopping assistants are beginning to collapse what was once a lengthy journey:

Discover → Research → Compare → Decide → Buy

Consumers can evaluate products, compare alternatives, understand reviews and narrow choices faster than ever. This could mean purchase intent forms earlier, making the weeks before traditional Holiday peak increasingly important.

Then, after Christmas, the shopping mission changes again. The gift recipient becomes the shopper. Gift cards, returns, upgrades and self-gifting create a distinct “Me-Buy” season.

For marketers, perhaps the biggest implication is this: Stop thinking of Holiday as a calendar. Start thinking of it as three distinct consumer mindsets.



Your spark for the week:

AI isn't just changing how consumers shop.
It may be changing when they become ready to buy.

NetElixir is an AI-First digital marketing agency helping leading eCommerce brands unlock profitable growth through data, experimentation, and innovation.