Visible | IgniteStack

Who's on AI's Christmas List?

How AI is recommending brands, shaping wishlists and creating new opportunities this festive season.

THE AI CHRISTMAS GIFTING REPORT

NOVEMBER 2026

THE INTRODUCTION

Christmas shopping just got interesting.

Buying Christmas presents can be a minefield. There's the dad who doesn't want anything, the teenager whose interests change every five minutes and the Secret Santa colleague you barely know. Finding something they'll actually like can take a surprising amount of effort.

And this year, more shoppers are looking to AI for help. According to research from Klaviyo, **62% of UK shoppers plan to use AI for festive shopping**, while separate research from Forter found that **53% have either used or are open to using AI to find Christmas presents**.

Rather than trawling through endless gift guides or retailer websites, shoppers can ask tools like ChatGPT and Gemini for ideas based on who they're buying for, what they like and how much they want to spend.

As AI becomes another place where shoppers discover and evaluate products, marketers need to ask: which brands are making it into those recommendations, and which are missing out?



62%

UK shoppers plan to use AI for festive shopping.
Klaviyo

53%

Have used or are open to AI for Christmas presents.
Forter

To find out, Visible PR teamed up with AI visibility specialists IgniteStack to test **100 Christmas gifting questions** across ChatGPT, Gemini and Google AI Overviews. Covering everything from jewellery and beauty to toys, stocking fillers and luxury hampers, we repeated the research six days later to see which brands consistently appeared.

Consumer statistics: Klaviyo, *State of the Holiday Buyer 2026*; Forter/OnePoll, AI Christmas shopping survey (September 2026). Full source links and methodology appear on the final page.

THE FINDINGS

Which brands made the Christmas list?

John Lewis came out on top overall, appearing 60 times in each research run. LEGO dominated children's gifting, while Monica Vinader led jewellery. In food and drink, Hampers.com came out ahead of Fortnum & Mason, Harrods and Selfridges. An impressive result for a specialist retailer competing against some of Britain's best-known names.

The findings suggest that being a household name doesn't necessarily mean you'll be recommended, particularly when shoppers are asking for something specific.



OVERALL GIFTING

John Lewis

60 appearances in each research run.

CHILDREN'S GIFTS

LEGO

The leading name in children's gifting.

JEWELLERY

Monica Vinader

The specialist brand topping jewellery.

FOOD & DRINK

Hampers.com

Ahead of established luxury favourites.

Interestingly, for PR and marketing teams, gift guides and product reviews from leading publications including **Which?, British GQ, British Vogue and BBC Good Food** also appeared among the sources cited in AI answers, alongside retailer websites and social platforms.

For brands of all sizes, the question is no longer just whether people know who they are, but whether they're being considered when shoppers ask AI what to buy.

RETAIL AND DISCOVERY

John Lewis has Christmas wrapped up.

For larger retailers, Christmas gifting plays to their strengths, and John Lewis is a good example. Whether you're buying for your mum, your partner, the children or the colleague you drew in Secret Santa, there's a good chance you'll find something that fits the bill.

Its website makes gifting straightforward, with dedicated sections by recipient and price, alongside ideas for shoppers who don't quite know what they're looking for. That breadth, combined with the retailer's established reputation, may help explain its consistent performance.

Other familiar names, including Selfridges, Harrods, Fortnum & Mason and M&S, also featured across the research. But the picture changes when shoppers start asking more specific questions.



FROM BROAD SEARCH TO SPECIFIC NEEDS

A specialist brand isn't necessarily going to compete with John Lewis for a question as broad as **“What should I buy my wife for Christmas?”** But it could be a strong contender when someone asks for a personalised piece of jewellery, a gift for a coffee lover or a present for someone who's obsessed with skincare.

The key takeaway here for brands and marketers is to understand which gifting questions their products are particularly well suited to, and make sure those reasons come through clearly on their websites, in product descriptions and in media coverage.

> “A brand doesn't need to be on everyone's Christmas list. It needs to be on the right ones.”

CATEGORY SPOTLIGHT / JEWELLERY

Why Monica Vinader is winning the jewellery race

Jewellery is one category where specialist brands are leading the AI recommendations.

Monica Vinader topped the jewellery rankings in both research runs, with Missoma and Astrid & Miyu also performing strongly. All three finished ahead of John Lewis in the second run.

Jewellery is a crowded gifting category, spanning luxury houses, high-street retailers and independent designers. So why are these particular brands standing out?



The common thread: Each top brand has a recognisable identity and gives shoppers a clear reason to choose it.

Monica Vinader has built a strong position around contemporary, accessible-premium jewellery, with personalisation and distinctive designs providing additional gifting appeal. **Missoma** is known for fashion-led, everyday jewellery and layering, while **Astrid & Miyu** has made a name for itself through ear stacks, piercings and permanent jewellery.

These are different propositions, but each helps explain who the products appeal to and why someone would choose them as a gift.

Descriptions such as beautiful, stylish or luxurious could apply to hundreds of jewellery brands. A more useful question is what makes a particular piece a good present. Is it the ability to personalise it, the craftsmanship, a meaningful design, a specific price point or something shoppers won't easily find elsewhere?

The same thinking applies to independent jewellery makers. A brand specialising in personalised pieces, recycled materials or designs with a particular meaning has a compelling reason to feature in more specific gifting recommendations, provided those qualities come through clearly in its product descriptions, reviews and editorial coverage.

JEWELLERY VISIBILITY | SHARE OF VOICE

Brand	Run 1	Run 2
Monica Vinader	20.5%	23.5%
Missoma	15.4%	19.6%
Astrid & Miyu	10.3%	13.7%
Pandora	10.3%	9.8%
John Lewis	10.3%	5.9%

> “Being a great jewellery brand is one thing. Giving shoppers a clear reason to choose you as a gift is another.”

Visible PR × IgniteStack; share of voice within tracked jewellery brands, not market share. Illustration is not a brand photograph.

BEAUTY, STOCKING FILLERS & SECRET SANTA

The beauty brands getting Christmas gifting right

Beauty brands are competing for attention across skincare, fragrance, make-up and wellness. But being a popular product doesn't automatically make something an obvious Christmas present.

Charlotte Tilbury led beauty and wellness in our research. NEOM also performed consistently, while Jo Malone London and CurrentBody featured among the recommendations.

These brands offer quite different things, but each has a recognisable gifting appeal.

Charlotte Tilbury combines well-known products with gift sets and different price points. NEOM has a strong association with wellbeing and relaxation, making it relevant to shoppers looking for something thoughtful or indulgent. CurrentBody brings a different proposition, combining beauty with technology.



BEAUTY GIFTING

No. 1

Charlotte Tilbury topped the category.

The lesson for other beauty brands isn't simply to create more Christmas gift sets. It's to consider how existing products fit the occasions shoppers are buying for, whether that's a little luxury, a practical skincare present or a gift for someone who needs time to themselves.

Small gifts, big opportunities

Stocking fillers and Secret Santa offer another opportunity to position products differently. John Lewis led both categories across the research, with Hotel Chocolat and Oliver Bonas among the names appearing consistently.

A £20 beauty product could make a great Secret Santa present, a premium hand cream a stocking filler, while a wellness set could be ideal for someone who deserves a little time to themselves.

For brands, it's about showing how their existing products fit different gifting occasions, making it clear who they're for, what they cost and why they'd make a good present.



AUDIENCE SPOTLIGHT / CHILDREN & TEENS

Children and teens: the brands making the Christmas list

Our research shows how different the brands and products appearing in AI gifting recommendations can be depending on who you're buying for.

AUDIENCE SPOTLIGHT: CHILDREN

LEGO leads the way



LEGO dominated AI recommendations for children's Christmas gifts, with **39.4% share of voice** in the second research run. Tonies and Yoto were also among the leading names.

LEGO spans ages, interests and themes, from construction and creative play to favourite franchises. Tonies and Yoto offer children's audio and entertainment, with products tailored to different age groups.

CHILDREN'S GIFTING

39.4%

LEGO share of voice in Run 2

Also appearing: **Tonies · Yoto**

For smaller toy brands: Can shoppers easily understand who a product is for, what children will enjoy about it and what makes it different from the alternatives?

AUDIENCE SPOTLIGHT: TEENS

Beauty meets technology



Sol de Janeiro and JBL were leading names in teen gifting recommendations. Beauty, technology and products with cultural appeal all featured, reflecting the range of interests shaping teenage Christmas wish lists.

For brands targeting teenagers, there's a distinct difference between having a product teens might enjoy and being recognised as relevant to that audience.

TEEN GIFTING BRANDS

Sol de Janeiro	14.0%
JBL	13.7%

For teen brands: Age-specific product information, relevant reviews and creator content can help communicate who a product is designed for and why it appeals.

Source: Visible PR × IgniteStack, October 2026. Shares are among tracked brands, not market share. LEGO: 12 October; Sol de Janeiro: 6 October; JBL: 12 October. Tonies and Yoto figures were not supplied. Images are AI-generated illustrative still lifes, not official brand product photos.

FOOD AND DRINK

How Hampers.com is outperforming the traditional luxury favourites

Hampers.com was one of the standout performers in our research, leading food and drink gifting in both runs, with a share of voice of **24.6% in Run 1** and **18.6% in Run 2**, ahead of established luxury retailers including Fortnum & Mason and Harrods.

Hampers.com's proposition is built around gifting, with dedicated collections organised by who you're buying for, the occasion, budget and type of hamper. Whether you're choosing a Christmas hamper for your parents, thanking a colleague or buying for a food lover, it's easy to find something that fits.

This mirrors the way people often ask AI for gift ideas: starting with who they're buying for, the occasion or their budget rather than a particular brand.



Hampers.com's performance provides a good example of how a specialist retailer can compete with some of Britain's best-known luxury brands by having a clear proposition built around a particular shopping need.

There's a lesson here for smaller food and drink brands too. An independent coffee roaster, chocolatier or premium food producer may have a great product, but are they showing shoppers why it would make a good gift, rather than just something to buy for themselves?

That distinction matters for PR. A founder profile may establish a business's story and credibility, while inclusion in a foodie gift guide can show readers how its products fit a particular occasion.

Brands hoping to feature in AI gifting recommendations should look at whether their wider media coverage reflects the reasons someone would choose their products as gifts, rather than simply telling their brand story.

FOOD & DRINK GIFTING | TRACKED-BRAND SHARE OF VOICE

Brand	Run 1	Run 2
Hampers.com	24.6%	18.6%
Fortnum & Mason	21.1%	13.6%
Harrods	7.0%	13.6%
Cartwright & Butler	8.8%	6.8%

Percentages refer to appearances among tracked brands; not retail market share.

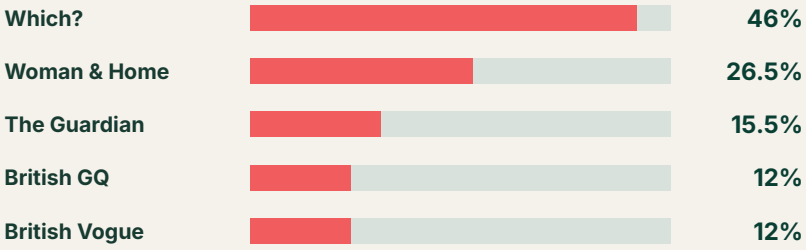
EDITORIAL EVIDENCE

Where AI gets its gift ideas

We looked at which publications and platforms were being cited alongside AI's gifting recommendations, with content from leading publishers featuring prominently.

MOST-CITED PUBLICATIONS IN CHATGPT GIFTING RECOMMENDATIONS

Which? was cited in 46% of the ChatGPT answers we examined, followed by Woman & Home at 26.5% and The Guardian at 15.5%. British GQ and British Vogue appeared in 12% each.



SOCIAL AND VIDEO PLATFORMS CITED BY GOOGLE AI OVERVIEWS

Google AI Overviews showed a different mix of sources.

16%	YouTube
6.5%	Reddit
2.5%	Instagram

Base: 200 responses per platform across both runs. The percentage is the share of responses citing a source, not a share of brand recommendations. Multiple sources could be cited in one answer.

FOUR GIFT GUIDES THAT APPEARED AMONG AI'S SOURCES

WHICH?
Best gifts for kids
15
Responses citing this guide across ChatGPT and Gemini

BRITISH GQ
Best stocking fillers
7
ChatGPT responses citing this guide

BRITISH VOGUE
100 gifts under £100
7
Responses citing this guide across ChatGPT and Google AI Overviews

BBC GOOD FOOD
Gifts for foodies
5
Responses citing this guide across ChatGPT and Gemini

> "The Christmas gift guides PR teams target are also being cited in AI gifting recommendations."

Visible PR × IgniteStack; counts reflect citation instances in the indicated response sets. A cited article does not prove that inclusion caused any brand recommendation.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR PR

Coverage with a purpose

The findings show why it's important for PR teams to carefully research the publications and types of content they're targeting. Gift guides and product reviews cited in answers to relevant shopping questions should be part of the strategy when planning seasonal outreach.

Our research reinforces the value of understanding what coverage actually communicates. An executive interview, product review or gift-guide inclusion are all useful, but they all have a different role to play.

For brands looking to be recommended as Christmas presents, the goal isn't simply more coverage. It's relevant coverage that helps explain why a product belongs on someone's shopping list.

THE EDITORIAL TAKEAWAY

> “The goal isn't simply more coverage. It's relevant coverage that helps explain why a product belongs on someone's shopping list.”

DIFFERENT COVERAGE. DIFFERENT ROLES.

01

Executive interview

Establishes a business story, its leadership and credibility.

02

Product review

Helps shoppers understand features, suitability and value.

03

Gift-guide inclusion

Connects a product to a specific audience or gifting occasion.

Interpretation of the source-citation research, not proof that any one type of coverage directly caused a brand to be recommended.

THE MARKETER'S CHECKLIST

Want to make the list? Here's where to start.

While there's no guaranteed way to appear in AI gifting recommendations, our research highlights four practical areas for brands and marketers to focus on.

01

Understand the questions shoppers are asking

Think about how someone might search for your products without already knowing your brand. Who are they buying for? What's their budget? What does the person they're buying for enjoy?

Identify the gifting questions where your products have a genuine reason to be considered.

02

Make your gifting proposition easy to understand

Review how products are described and organised across your website. Are occasions, prices, availability and benefits easy to find?

John Lewis and Hampers.com show the value of making the shopping task straightforward.

03

Look beyond your own website

Find out which publications, gift guides, reviews and other third-party sources appear in answers to relevant questions.

Use that information to focus your PR on opportunities where your products genuinely fit the editorial brief.

04

Measure where you're actually showing up

Don't assume brand recognition or successful PR automatically translates into AI visibility.

Test relevant questions across platforms, identify which competitors appear and track what changes over time.

The bigger picture

"Christmas may be the focus of this research, but the same principle applies whenever shoppers ask AI for help choosing a product: being known isn't quite the same as being considered."

THE NEXT STEP

Is your brand on AI's Christmas list?

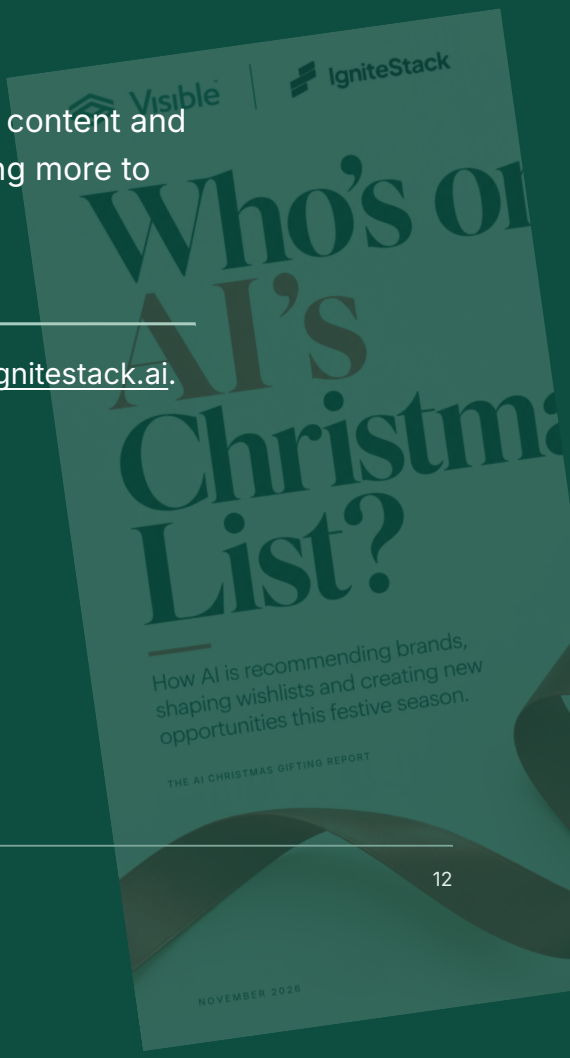
Request your free AI visibility snapshot from Visible PR × IgniteStack.

Find out whether your brand appears across a focused selection of relevant Christmas gifting questions, which competitors are being recommended and examples of the sources AI is citing.

We'll also highlight priority opportunities for your Christmas content and PR, helping you understand where your brand could be doing more to get noticed.

To request your snapshot, email hello@visiblepr.co.uk or hello@ignitestack.ai.

Visible™ × IgniteStack



METHODOLOGY & CREDITS

Behind the research

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

IgniteStack tested **100 non-branded UK Christmas gifting prompts** across ChatGPT, Gemini and Google AI Overviews on **6 October 2026**, repeating the exercise on **12 October 2026**.

The research covered ten gifting categories, including general gifts, gifts for women and men, children, teens, stocking fillers and Secret Santa, food and drink, beauty and wellness, jewellery and accessories, and luxury gifting.

Brand appearances and share of voice were measured within a defined universe of tracked brands. **Share of voice is not market share.** It represents the proportion of brand appearances within that tracked universe.

Publication citation percentages are based on each platform's **200 responses** across the two research runs. A response could cite more than one publication or platform.

The findings are specific to the questions and dates tested. They do not prove that particular marketing or PR activity caused a recommendation.

EXTERNAL CONSUMER RESEARCH

Klaviyo — State of the Holiday Buyer 2026
62% of UK shoppers plan to use AI for festive shopping.

Forter — How Agentic AI Is Factoring Into Christmas Shopping in the UK (16 September 2026); survey of 2,000 UK adults. 53% have used or are open to using AI to find gifts.

IMAGE NOTES

Photography supplied by the report authors includes selected Pexels imagery. Additional generic festive, jewellery, beauty, toy and technology scenes are AI-generated illustrations. They are not official product or campaign photography for the brands discussed.

Rights for any independently sourced photography should be reconfirmed against the original download licence before external distribution.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

Visible PR

Visible PR is a strategic communications agency helping consumer and B2B brands, as well as business leaders, build reputation, authority and visibility through earned media, thought leadership and brand storytelling.

IgniteStack

IgniteStack specialises in AI visibility research and analysis, helping businesses understand how their brands appear across AI-powered search and recommendation environments.

Visible PR × IgniteStack brings AI search intelligence and strategic communications expertise together to help brands understand and strengthen their visibility.