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To my fellow marketing pros: 'tis the season. As you start to implement your holiday marketing campaigns, here are a few of my top recommendations for D2C holiday advertising. These suggestions apply to D2C businesses ranging from food subscription services to hair and beauty, and they work whether you're advertising on social, search, TV, radio, or all of the above. As you think about how to reach and make an impact on your target consumers, consider these strategies to get the most out of your holiday ads.

## 1. Optimize your campaigns for shopping

As expected, user behavior is very different during the holidays than it is the rest of the year – people are just looking to buy quickly and easily, so keep this in mind when developing your campaigns. If you typically run educational content ads, videos, or user-generated content, I recommend pausing or lowering spend on those types of creative during the holidays. Instead, ramp up your hyper-focused, product-specific ads with clear messaging about your offer or why this is a great holiday deal.

What is it about your product that will make it a must-have this holiday season? Is your product a subscription service that you can suggest to customers as a recurring gift idea? Are you able to offer a unique discount or promotion on your product? Do you have a new or exclusive holiday release of your product? Keep that top of mind as you develop your messaging, creative, and overall buyer experience.

Consider your transaction process, too. Are there any steps you can remove to make the process quicker? From the moment a target customer sees your ad to the moment they click "confirm" after checkout should be as fast and seamless as possible to lower the risk of losing customers.

## 2. Be direct

Add the promo language front and center on your ads and "above the fold" on your landing page to make the experience smooth, consistent, and clear. Consider a quick "thank you" email once the transaction is complete. You're probably attracting some new traffic with your ads, so this is a nice touch that will keep people coming back to your business.

Here's an example of a campaign we optimized for shopping in 2021. We add a countdown timer to create a sense of urgency and make the promotion even more attractive.

Here, shorter countdown increments were used – 10 minutes – and the clock was triggered upon page load for every day of the promotion.

If you're offering a promotion or holiday sale, focus on a really direct approach: add a clear call-to-action and make it front-and-center. Placement is everything when users have ad overload around the holidays. The easier and more clear you make your shopping experience, the better. Similar to the language, make sure to reflect this creative across your ads and through to the landing page.

### 3. Consider adding new channels

With viewership at its highest before the holidays, adding cable and streaming TV to your advertising mix is one of our top recommendations. Combining these channels can give you an edge against competitors who may only be using one channel to promote their campaigns.

Audio advertising (think: terrestrial radio, Spotify, Pandora, iHeart and podcasts) is another great way to promote your products around the holidays. Our Vice President of Media and Strategy, Thomas Starr, recommends beginning audio ads about two weeks prior to the holidays when the majority of people are starting to tune in to holiday music and listening more during holiday travel. This could help gather the learnings necessary for a strong campaign in Q1.

With both streaming TV and audio channels, you can have a really broad reach at an efficient CPM while still being able to be extremely precise with behavioral or contextual targeting. You can also build audiences based on lists, so we suggest using audience insights you've already gathered from digital to build your targeting for TV and radio.

We're also recommending that our clients try TikTok! We know, it's everywhere. But if you haven't yet, this is your sign to jump on the TikTok wagon. The trending social platform reports that 70% of users expect TikTok to inspire them to make a purchase during Black Friday this year, and 80% of users who bought something on Black Friday last year said TikTok played a role. Some of the most successful ad trends we're seeing on TikTok can work great with a holiday spin.

### 4. Timing (and targeting) is everything

For social and search ads, I recommend launching at least one week prior to Black Friday, Cyber Monday, or whatever your target advertising period is to give your ads enough time to go through platform approvals. For TV and radio, we see the biggest push from about December 5 to December 20. Brands typically end their holiday promotions around December 21 to allow time for order shipments.

No matter what advertising mix you're using this season, we almost always recommend using broad targeting and then retargeting for holiday advertising. It's more likely your shoppers span wider demographics since it's the gift-giving season, so try to reach as many as you can during this time of year.

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