

# **How to Increase your Holiday Sales – Special Report**

**Guide to Increasing Your Sales This Holiday Season**

**By**

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## Why free?

I believe that free is important. Free is what keeps me going. Don't think that I don't care about money, because I do. But to me, everything should be free at first, then, if you enjoy it, then you should pay the money. This is what it should be like when buying software. You should be able to download a free trial, and you should be able to use it for 1 day, 7 days, or 30 days, or maybe just 30 minutes, what's important, is that you should be able to try it before you buy it. The same goes for close to anything, even food, because you should be able to taste it before you buy it.

This report is not about money, although it's about how your business should be using social networking sites. It's about marketing. At the bottom, in the footer, I've included three interesting systems/e-books that I recommend. My affiliate links are included.

Now. Before you start reading this report, please take a few minutes and visit KIVA.org, an organization like no other organization you probably have seen. Kiva let you loan to low income entrepreneurs. Kiva's mission is to connect people through lending for the sake of alleviating poverty. It's what's gets me up in the morning, and keeps me going. It's all about hope and giving people an opportunity.

I have recently created a team of lenders at Kiva, and I would be really happy if you would join me and my friends (well, at the moment it's only me). I'd really appreciate it. Very little money can save lives.

Please join me today at: <http://www.kiva.org/team/jens>

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## Introduction

The holidays are a wonderful time. They're full of excitement. Family memories and traditions and good old-fashioned capitalism. Regardless of your business industry, model and target audience, the holidays can be the perfect time to increase your sales.

Based on the statistics and data collected religiously by industry watch groups, we know two things:

1. We know that more and more people are shopping online. This is particularly true during the holiday season.
2. We also know that the economy affects online shopping just as much as it affects brick and mortar retailers.

This report is dedicated to helping you plan from the holidays so you can position your business optimally during this potentially lucrative season and make the most from holiday sales.

In this report we'll discuss...

#1 Getting Your Website Site Primed And Pumped For Holiday Profits including:

- Optimizing your site for the holidays.
- Enhancing navigation
- Making your customers feel safe and secure
- Enhancing the customer experience

#2 Developing Promotions, Products And Offers For Holiday Profits including:

- Cross promotion and upsell opportunities
- Customer incentives
- Building your opt-in list
- Creating new products and services with a holiday spin

#3 Creating, Implementing And Evaluating Your Holiday Marketing Strategy including:

- Evaluating your current marketing strategy and building on what's working
- Partnering with others for budget holiday marketing
- Testing, tracking and measuring for success

Let's get started!

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## Part One

### Getting Your Website Site Primed And Pumped For Holiday Profits

Before the holidays hit, it pays to make sure your website is in optimal working order. Here are the steps to take to get your website primed and pumped for holiday profits.

#### Step #1 Search Engine Optimization.

This is a two-part step. The first part requires you to make sure you're optimized for the search engines with your existing content. That means your current and scheduled web pages need to take keywords and keyword phrases. The HTML needs to be properly coded. Your linking strategy needs to be in place and working to generate incoming links and internal linking. A sitemap should be up and running and of course new content is being added on a regular basis.

Part two involves creating a search engine optimization strategy for the holidays. Research the keywords and keyword phrases customers might use during the holiday season. Optimize your site and content for these holiday keywords and keyword phrases, add the required HTML coding and create a strategy to build incoming links for this seasonal strategy.

#### Step #2 Test the integrity of your website.

Go through your site, page by page, link by link and word by word. Evaluate and fix any broken links, misspellings, errors, graphics that take too long to upload. If there are any navigation issues, fix them. The key here is to eliminate any reason why someone might leave your site. Don't give them an excuse!

#### Step #3 How much can you handle?

Is your website, and server, prepared for a rush of traffic and transactions? Find out how much traffic your website can support and make sure it's more than enough to cover you during those peak buying times.

#### Step #4 Optimize your search function.

Do you offer a search function on your website? One that enables users to find exactly what they're looking for quickly and easily? If so, make sure it takes many variables into consideration including misspellings.

#### Step #5 Make sure your policies and procedures are up to date.

This includes all autoresponders sent to customers during the buying process. Evaluate to make sure the system is working optimally and that you've said everything you need to say. This is also a great time to start working on your cross promotions and upselling. We'll talk in the next section about marketing strategies and holiday promotions.

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#### Step #6 Is your shopping cart functioning optimally?

Spend some time running through test transactions so you see what your customers see. How can you improve the user experience and make shopping on your site, and paying for products or services, as easy and enjoyable as possible? One of the most common causes of lost sales are abandoned shopping carts. If this is a problem that plagues you, now's the time to resolve it.

#### Step #7 Make sure your home office is ship-shape.

In order to operate effectively and efficiently during the holiday season, it pays to have your home office running smoothly. If you sell a tangible product, then getting your home office in shape also includes making sure your inventory is stocked and organized along with your shipping materials.

#### Step #8 Evaluate your website's security.

Customers are increasingly aware of their online security. Make sure your security certification, SSL, is up to date and do everything possible to protect your customer's privacy.

#### Step #9 Back up your website.

There's nothing worse than a crash or being hacked during the holidays. If you can quickly reload your website from a backup, you're golden. If you have to redo everything from scratch, the holidays aren't going to be as joyful.

As you're tweaking and optimizing your business website for the best customer experience possible, be sure to perform several tests. Test purchase your products, test opt-in, test search, test contact – test everything! You'll be glad you did!

Once your website is running as smoothly as possible and you're confident it can handle whatever the holidays throw at it it's time to start planning and implementing your holiday promotions, products and offers.

## Part Two

### Developing Promotions, Products And Offers For Holiday Profits.

The holidays are a great time to let loose with your marketing and product creation efforts. It's the time to really give your customers a bang for their buck so to speak. Not only will you attract attention, you'll earn sales and build on your already growing customer base, which sets the stage for increased profits year around. Let's first take a look at holiday promotion ideas.

#### Holiday Promotions – What Do You Have to Offer?

The opportunities for holiday promotions are virtually limitless. Here are just a few possibilities to consider:

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- A Holiday discount, which is applied to specific products or services or can be applied across the board.
- If you have a membership site or a service then the holidays is a great time to offer a free trial. This is good continuity marketing at it's best. After a predetermined period of time, if the customer hasn't cancelled their membership then you charge the fee. Of course, with any and all continuity marketing efforts you must be absolutely clear and transparent about the program. Any hidden charges, terms or conditions can get you in trouble with the FTC and you'll lose customers and your reputation.
- A combination price discount. For example, buy one product bundle and get 50% off your next order or 50% off another item in your store.
- A free bonus. This can be given away with a purchase or used simply to entice customers to your website. One idea utilized by Bath and Body Works when they were building their email list was to give away a coupon for a free product in exchange for an email address. So the holidays can be used to not only boost seasonal profits but to build your opt-in list and boost profits year around.
- Free delivery. If you offer a tangible product, which has to be shipped, then free delivery during the holidays is a sure way to entice shoppers to shop online and avoid the malls!
- The buy now pay later option is also a great way to entice holiday spending on your website. This of course takes a little attention and fine tuning when it comes to your shopping cart software however you can capture their credit card information as an authorization and then complete the sale when the predetermined time has passed.

Of course in addition to creating special promotions for the holidays, if you've left enough time in your calendar, you can also create special products just for the holiday season or to take advantage of holiday traffic.

### **Holiday Season Product Creation Ideas and Strategies – What's in Your Gift Bag?**

What type of product you create for the holiday season depends a lot on your business model. If you're an information marketer then creating information products can be a lot of fun during the holidays.

You can:

- Create new information products
- Combine information products to create a new one
- Buy the rights to a new information product and tweak it to meet your needs
- Launch a membership site or promotion
- Partner with a relevant business to create a product together. For example, if you offer pet training information and your partner offers pet diet information or products then you can create a combined product for cross promotion and more sales.

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If you have a website business model that runs strictly on affiliate sales and advertising sales then you're at the mercy, to some extent, to the products and promotions of the products you're affiliated with.

If you have a website that sells tangible products then you have plenty of time to add to your catalog. Consider adding seasonal items. Again using the pet site example, holiday items include treats packaged for the holidays, holiday attire because dogs and cats just love to dress up, and pet care sets for those who are receiving a pet for the holidays.

Finally, if you have a business that offers a service think about how you can cater your service to the holidays. Sticking with the pet site example, if you offer pet training services then your service could be catered to the holidays by offering holiday training, preparing pets for out of town visitors, preparing pets for extended travel and preparing pets for a boarding or pet sitting situation.

The opportunity for new holiday products is almost as limitless as holiday promotions. Take your business model and your customers' needs into consideration when making product plans.

Okay, so we have our promotions lined up and our new products ready to go. Our website is ship shape and ready for the flood of holiday traffic and sales. Now it's time to take a look at your holiday marketing strategy.

### **Part Three**

#### **Creating, Implementing And Evaluating Your Holiday Marketing Strategy.**

Now comes the fun part, if tweaking your website and creating products and promotions wasn't fun enough. It's time to create your marketing goals and implement strategies to achieve those goals.

Step #1 Evaluate your current marketing strategies.

Take a look at your current marketing strategies and evaluate what's working like gangbusters and what's not working as well as you'd like.

The marketing strategies that are working is where you're going to probably want to focus the majority of your holiday marketing efforts. That's not to say that you can't try new marketing tactics however if you're on a tight budget then it's always a good idea to stick with what's working.

Step #2 Evaluating potential marketing ideas and strategies.

During the holidays there are some marketing strategies that work quite well and are extremely cost effective. They include:

- Cross promotion with other relevant businesses. This can include anything from ad swapping to link exchanges, newsletter promotion and so on.
- If you already have an e-newsletter, consider increasing the delivery frequency during the holidays. Make your holiday newsletter as powerful and engaging as possible (and always promote the forward to a friend option during the holidays)

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- Holiday advertising campaigns. Advertising isn't limited to banner and text ads on other sites. You can also create classified ads and submit them to classified ad sites and set up an AdWords account to generate some traffic that way.
- Don't forget social networking and face-to-face networking. Regardless of your business model, the more personal connections you make the faster your business will grow. People buy from people they like.

Step #3 Determine what your marketing goals are.

Do you want to grow your website traffic? Increase affiliate income? Increase profits? Before you plan and implement a marketing strategy, it's important to make sure your strategy matches your goals.

Step #4 Testing and tracking for results.

As with any marketing strategy, implement measures and procedures to test and track your marketing efforts. Not only will you be able to tell if you're achieving your goals, or hopefully exceeding them, you'll have a head start next holiday season.

Finally, before we wrap this section up here are a few more ideas for holiday marketing:

- Customer loyalty programs are a great way to motivate purchases and they offer the perfect marketing opportunity. You can create press releases and an ad campaign to market your new loyalty program.
- Boost your list marketing strategy by creating a new holiday oriented giveaway. As you probably have heard, the money is in the list and the holidays can be a great opportunity to build this all important list.
- Enhance article marketing efforts before the holidays to drive more traffic to your site.
- Consider increasing your advertising campaigns, and pay attention to potential keyword phrases that include holiday terminology. For example, Christmas gifts for pet lovers.
- Don't forget your current list members. Promote to them and ask them to promote you. Give incentives for doing so.
- Positioning images and graphics on your site and in your marketing materials designed to highlight and invoke holiday sentiment.
- Finally, if you have an affiliate team, don't forget to give them a big red sack full of holiday promotions and marketing materials. They're hungry for holiday commissions and can be the best way to boost your holiday sales.

Marketing during the holidays presents a whole host of opportunities. You can capitalize on what's working right for you and amplify it for the holidays. And you can take advantage of new promotions and products to really give your holiday marketing strategy a powerful, and profitable, emphasis.

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## Wrapping It Up

The holidays are an exciting time. It's an opportunity to boost not only your website traffic, you can also increase your opt-in list and of course earn more profits.

The key to a successful holiday season is to make sure:

- Your website is primed and ready to go, ready for hordes of visitors who are ready to purchase your products or services again and again.
- You have products and/or services highlighted for the holiday season. This will attract attention on your website and give you additional items to market.
- You have holiday promotions prepared and ready to market.
- You have a marketing strategy designed to help you achieve your holiday business goals.
- Your office, schedule and state of mind are prepared for the holiday season. If not, get help! Contractors can be a real asset during the busy season.

And remember to keep track of everything that works well this holiday season. That way you'll be miles ahead next year with this exciting season rolls around again.

Happy holiday selling!

Jens P. Berget

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