

How to deliver the only exceptional value shoppers want these December holidays

 By [Bandile Ndzishe](#)

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The highly competitive December holiday marketing has no place for the pliant and weak marketers. It is a war room affair.



Image credit: holiday.xpressdocs.com

Every morning the previous day's sales figures are analysed, marketing performance is objectively scrutinised, new sales targets are set, and marketing campaigns are tweaked and intensified.

The ongoing search is for dramatic actions that will cause consumer excitement and leave a compelling impression that drives consumer spending.

At noon, calls to the stores are made to quiz store managers about how busy the morning has been. Are sales people selling and meeting their daily sales targets? Is the till ringing non-stop? The day does not end until 9pm.

This is the time when the chief marketing officer looks back at the day's sales and marketing events and activities and reflects on the strengths and weaknesses of the day, and finally, just before heading home, plots the next day's strategy about vanquishing perceived threats and taking advantage of ignored opportunities. This is all in a day's work as we enter the peak times of December holiday season. Festive season marketing demands nothing less.

Are you wondering how you can elevate your marketing campaigns above the mundane horizontal levels of current Christmas marketing noise and clutter during this period of heightened consumer spending?



Image credit: blog.storeya.com

7. Great deals drive action

It is a no-brainer that sale prices influence holiday purchasing decisions. Consumers will pawn their grandmothers for a great deal. This is just how powerful great savings are in driving consumer extra spending. Over 80% of consumers say they would consider going over budget for a great deal. This means coupons, discounts and combo deals are a must. If you have ever doubted just how powerful great deals are in driving consumer spending, you only have to look at all the craze, madness and mayhem during [Black Fridays](#).

6. Black Friday replicas

Creating holiday mayhem for your products does not have to end with Black Fridays. It has to start with Black Fridays as they signal the beginning of the Christmas shopping season. Throughout the festive season, continue creating consumers who are vicious for your best deals. Chop and change, mix and match, whilst you continue offering deep discounts.

However, this is not feasible and sustainable for all retailers and brands as it slashes profit margins to the bone in an attempt to keep turnover moving and more customers visiting your stores. In that case, you must do what works best for your profitability. Already a trend has emerged where retailers are stretching Black Friday deals and promotions across December, termed and themed differently of course. Even though the focus has not been removed from one big sales day of shopping such as Black Friday, those shoppers who are still much hungrier for great deals will still have their needs met long after Black Friday has come and gone if you continue offering irresistible great deals throughout December.

5. Elevated digital marketing and active social media presence influence Christmas shopping

To understand just how and when social media influences consumer purchasing decisions brands and retailers must ask

the following key questions:

- A. Who influences online holiday purchasing decisions?
- B. Who are the influencers?

Here are your answers:

- Trusted bloggers.
- Family and friends.
- Brands and retailers' own special offers on Facebook and Twitter.

When brands and retailers share deals, tips and useful ideas via social media as part of their Christmas marketing, they experience a sharp spike in holiday purchases. Trusted bloggers, family and friends pick up on these marketing initiatives and if such deals and special offers are great, they recommend them to their followers, friends and family members. In turn, the followers make favourable buying decisions because their favourite bloggers recommended them.

A few days just before Black Friday I visited a few influential South African bloggers' sites and was so amazed how inundated they were with questions from their followers who wanted to know which South African retailers – online and brick and mortar – were offering Black Friday deals. One blogger, in particular, kept reassuring his followers that he will keep posting Black Friday deals and links-to-deals on his website as they become available.

A strategy on active social media presence requires you to keep working on your traffic-generating activities in order to continue making good sales.

Facebook Ads give brands and retailers the opportunity to reach a wider and active audience. A myriad of online retailers experienced great success with Facebook advertising because of its several major advantages.



Image credit: [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)

The first is the breadth and depth of the targeting options available, allowing you to create incredibly granular custom audiences based on demographic data as well as other metrics such as interests, shopping preferences, and other behavioural identifiers. Secondly, Facebook advertising is cost-effective and astute brands and retailers take advantage of this by capitalising on increased holiday traffic. Remember that digitally savvy shoppers are relentlessly on the lookout for great deals. That means you need to be where they are, right now and always. These well-informed shoppers are as keen on a digital deal as they are for more traditional in-store shopping deals. Use hashtags and giveaways on social media to promote your products.

4. Leverage the power of #Hashtags



Image credit: [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)

Consumers do not want to be left in the dark. Ignorance is not bliss. Shoppers like to follow trends and get their hands on the products that people are talking about. Spread the word about your discounts and holiday promotions with the power of

hashtags on Twitter and Instagram. Hashtags make it easier for your campaign to reach more shoppers and gets more consumers talking about your retailer and brands.

Be interactive and engaging with your social media campaigns. Be available and willing to talk with customers who want to engage with you, answer their questions, facilitate campaign debate and solicit some feedback about your special deals. Whilst at it, ask them for suggestions about future deals, promotions and campaigns. You will be so amazed how much consumers want to partake in your brand's decision-making process.

3. Smartphone shopping moments



30% of all online shopping purchases now happen on mobile phones.

Image credit: thinkwithgoogle.com

To have extraordinary marketing campaigns that stand out, brands and retailers must invest in real-time mobile advertising more than ever before this holiday season. This well-considered mobile strategy will target holiday shoppers who are constantly on their mobile devices while walking around a store, on a tea break at work, waiting for or on a train or bus, etc. Research conducted by Google through their platform, Think with Google, and published in September 2015 revealed that 54% of all holiday shoppers say that they plan to shop on their smartphones in spare moments throughout the day, like while walking or commuting.

Google calls these smartphone moments 'micro-moments'. They are shorter mobile sessions that occur throughout the day and are visible in the Google data: shoppers now spend 7% less time in each mobile session, yet smartphones' share of online purchases has gone up 64% over the last year, the Google research revealed. The days of "look on mobile but buy on the laptop" are changing: 30% of all online shopping purchases now happen on mobile phones.

Google describes micro moments as follows:

Micro moments are smartphone moments when consumers are very open to the influence of brands and retailers. These are the moments when shoppers want help informing their choices or making decisions. They're the moments when they turn to a device – often a smartphone – to take action on whatever they need or want right now.

"These I-want-to-know, I-want-to-go, I-want-to-buy, and I-want-to-do moments are loaded with intent, context, and immediacy."

For marketers, these moments are an open invitation to engage. And they're the moments you have to be ready for.



Image credit: thinkwithgoogle.com

The Google data also revealed that shopping-related searches on mobile have grown more than 120% year-over-year. Consumers are using their smartphones in all parts of the shopping process – starting with inspiration, then on through research and purchase. More and more retailers are finding that their shoppers are using their phones for research before hitting a store.

For instance, Target found that three-quarters of their customers start their experience on a mobile device. In fact, Casey Carl, chief strategy and innovation officer, considers mobile their new front door to the store. And it's not just before the store when shoppers turn to their phone. This year, a whopping 82% of smartphone users will consult their phone while in a store. And people are searching 37% more inside department stores than they were last year.

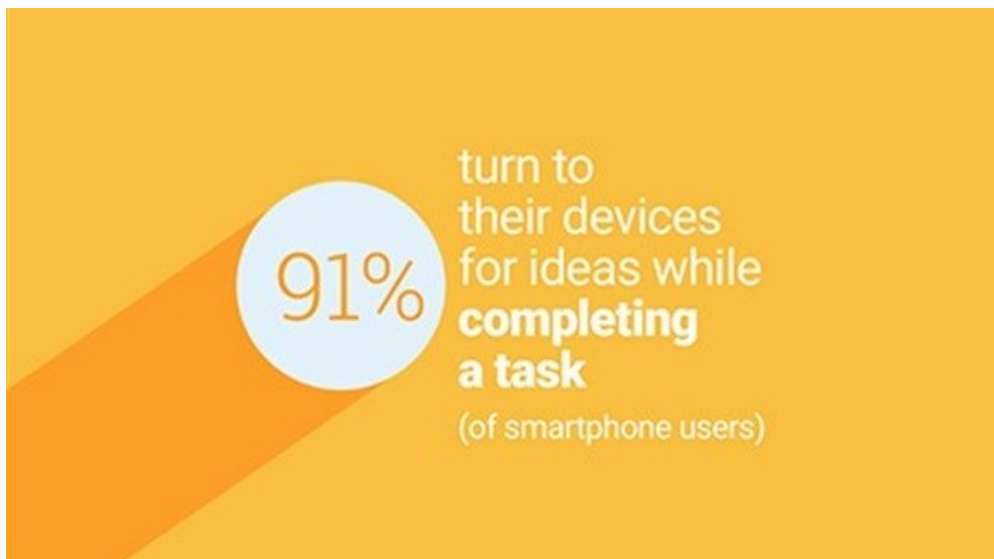


Image credit: thinkwithgoogle.com

All this Google data points to 2015 holiday shopping trends. It is insightful and actionable research, which marketers and their brands and retailers can use effectively to influence smartphone shopping decisions. Take advantage of the burgeoning shopping-related searches on mobile phones. As shopping decisions are made faster, and consumer expectations grow higher, retailers today have to keep a close watch on how customers find, research, and buy their products. Marketers who understand these new shopper patterns and focus on micro-moments of intent – on both mobile and video – will be more successful with customers this holiday season.



Image credit: [thinkwithgoogle.com](https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com)

The data from the Google research concludes that today, you have to earn the customer's consideration and action, moment after moment. Why?

Because people are more loyal to their need in the moment than to any brand.

Case in point:

65% of smartphone users agree that when conducting a search on their smartphones, they look for the most relevant information, regardless of the company providing the information. That makes micro moments the new battleground for brands and retailers. Here are three essential strategies that can help you win micro-moments:



Image credit: [thinkwithgoogle.com](https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com)

Be there

You've got to anticipate the micro moments for users in your industry and then commit to being there to help when those moments occur.

Be useful

You've got to be relevant to consumers' needs in the moment and connect people to the answers they're looking for.

Be quick

They're called micro moments for a reason. Mobile users want to know, go, and buy swiftly. Your mobile experience has to be fast and frictionless.

2. Create a sense of urgency for your deals

This oldest trick in the book still works like a charm. It is a highly effective way to push hesitant prospects over the line and convert.

- Limited stock only!
- While stock lasts!
- Offer ends tomorrow!
- This weekend only!
- The first 100 shoppers will get ...!
- Offer time sensitive deals and start counting down.

1. Reward shoppers for visiting your brick-and-mortar stores

You have the best deals ever. You have the most incredible offers. But so do your competitors. Perhaps it is high time you incentivised and rewarded shoppers for visiting and purchasing at your stores. This will undoubtedly increase your store visits and purchases. Your campaign will stand out and word of mouth will start spreading rapidly.

I am not talking about the current rewards programmes, which no longer appeal to shoppers. This is about immediate till point cash savings, whereby 5 to 10% of the shopper's grand total of their purchases is given back to them as money-back reward. Instant cash, at the till, after each purchase. Not accumulative rewards programmes that take forever before they become something tangible.

In August 2010 Shopkick, an American company based in Silicon Valley, created and launched a shopping app for smartphones and tablets that offer customers rewards for walking into stores. *Yes, just for walking into stores.*

It was the first mobile application that gave consumers rewards and exclusive deals in return for simply walking into a store.



Image credit: shopkick.com

Shopkick's location technology allows the app to verify the user's presence inside any retail partner's store. Beacons fixed to the store's ceiling emit an inaudible ultrasound signal at a frequency that can be picked up by a cell phone's microphone. The Shopkick app decodes the signal and contacts Shopkick's database to work out where the user is in the store, and if they are eligible for a reward.

Consumers are going to shop anyway, they might as well go and shop where they will be rewarded for doing so. Do not fail to drive traffic to your stores by immediately rewarding shoppers at till point for shopping at your establishments:

"SAVE 10% AS MONEY-BACK REWARD ON YOUR ENTIRE SHOPPING WHEN YOU SHOP WITH US! WE GIVE YOU INSTANT CASH, AT THE TILL, AFTER EACH PURCHASE. Ts & Cs APPLY"

Your terms and conditions could stipulate that in order to be eligible, a minimum acceptable grand total amount must be reached.

Leave nothing to chance this holiday season

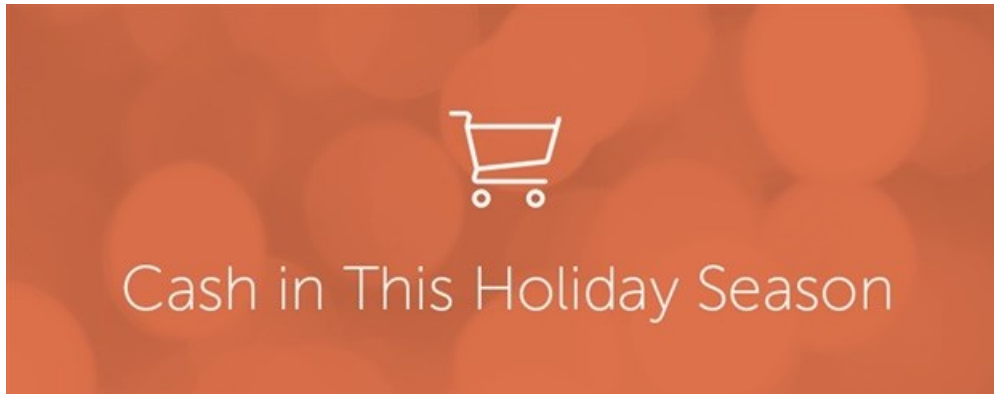


Image credit: Pinterest.com

December holidays still present golden opportunities to boost sales and make more profit. It is still the time of the year when people are most willing to spend for year-end celebrations. What you do not want is for your marketing promotions to appear to have reached a plateau.

Retail success is not confined only to weekend sales or one-day sales promotions. It is dependent on seamless daily, weekly and weekend promotions. Ensure that your retailers and brands are top of mind for the shoppers by being present throughout the entire shopper research period and at the time of purchase. Whether you embark on an aggressive promotional pricing, highly promotional and intensely competitive on price, or heavy rotation of holiday ads throughout December, delivering the exceptional value shoppers want is what will really drive consumers to your stores.

ABOUT BANDILE NDZISHE

CEO, Founder & Global Consulting CMO at Bandzisho Group | CMO-Level Marketing Mastermind Bandile is a Prolific Growth Driver, a seasoned CMO-level global growth master marketer with 25+ years' practical marketing strategy experience, a multi-faceted EXCO-level Chief Marketing Officer, a board-level marketing mastermind and a consumer psychologist who delivers a broad range of strategic marketing planning, marketing management initiatives and digital marketing efforts that guarantee measurable sale results for businesses. Bandile generates an upsurge in new leads, sales and repeat business.

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