



Holiday Season E-commerce Marketing Guide

2021

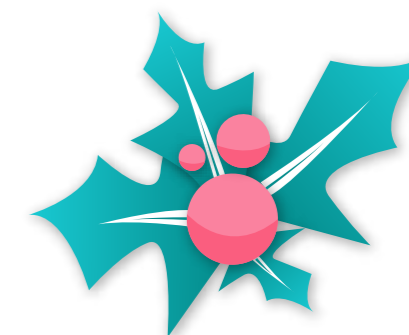


Introduction

With Black Friday kicking off the holiday shopping season, many e-commerce businesses are planning their holiday season campaigns. The past years' holiday season sales have been increasing for each year and 2021 will hardly be an exception.

As the Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing precautions have changed the way consumers behave, this holiday season will be unique. Many are asking how this will affect Black Week, Cyber Monday and Christmas shopping.

We are always looking for ways to support our customers in ways beyond what is expected and with this guide, we hope to give marketers and e-commerce managers some guidance and ideas for the upcoming holiday season shopping.





PREPARING FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Start planning and preparing for the holiday season

7-15



BUILD MOMENTUM

Kick off branding and acquisition campaigns

16-17



MAXIMIZE SALES

Kick off sales campaigns

18-22



POST HOLIDAY SALES

Sales and Retention - gear up your cross-sell and up-sell campaigns

23-25



2021 - a year of recovery

The classic lines outside department stores starting from 5 AM on Black Friday seem to be back. As governments around the world are removing social restrictions, Black Friday might be record breaking.

According to a report by McKinsey & Company, consumer spending has recovered from Covid-19. And shoppers now have a habit of doing most of their shopping online. One thing that seems to change however is the amount of people planning to do their holiday shopping online.

Ecommerce boasted a global revenue of \$3.9 trillion in 2020. Adobe is predicting that global e-commerce sales will reach \$4.2 trillion in 2021, with U.S. consumers accounting for close to one-quarter of that spending.

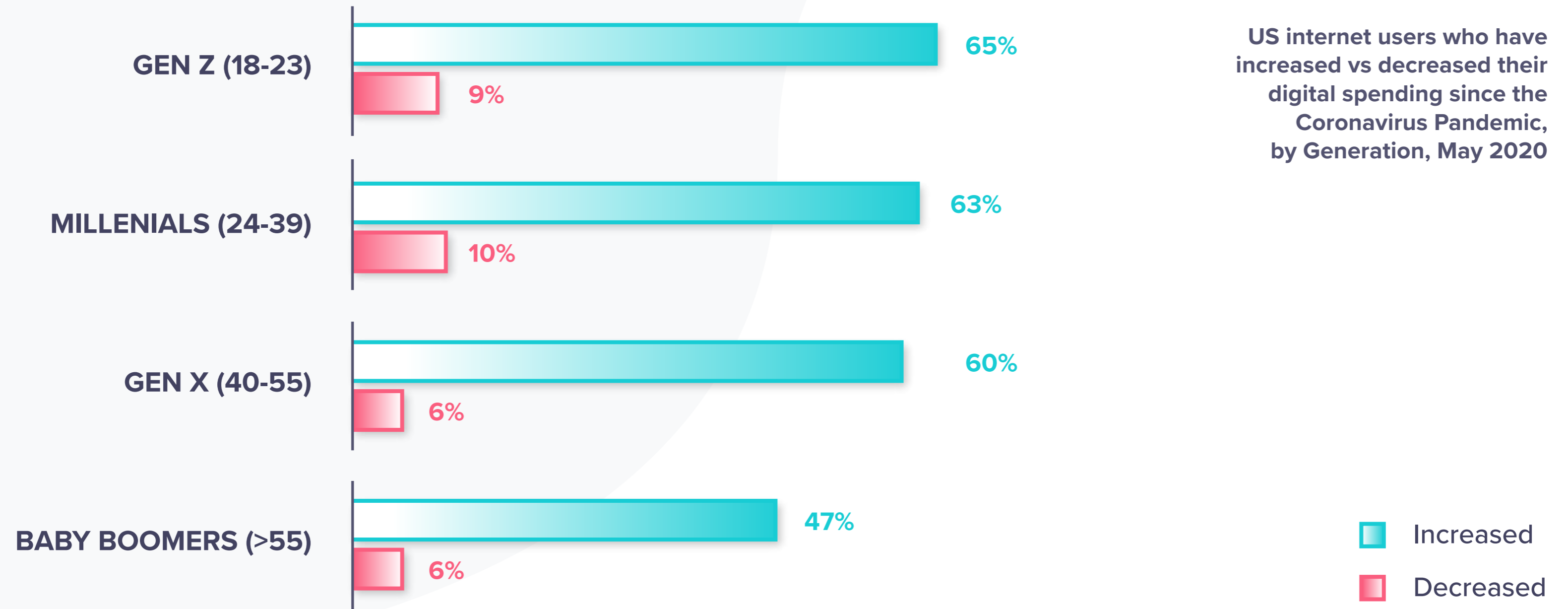


Consumers will be shopping more online - that seems to be as clear as day at this point. Even though more shopping will be online, consumers don't plan to spend less on their holiday shopping than normal. This means that the 2021 Holiday Shopping season looks to be as busy as ever, and more hectic than ever when it comes to e-commerce. Online retailers will need to be prepared for probably the highest demand ever witnessed.

A new generation of online consumers

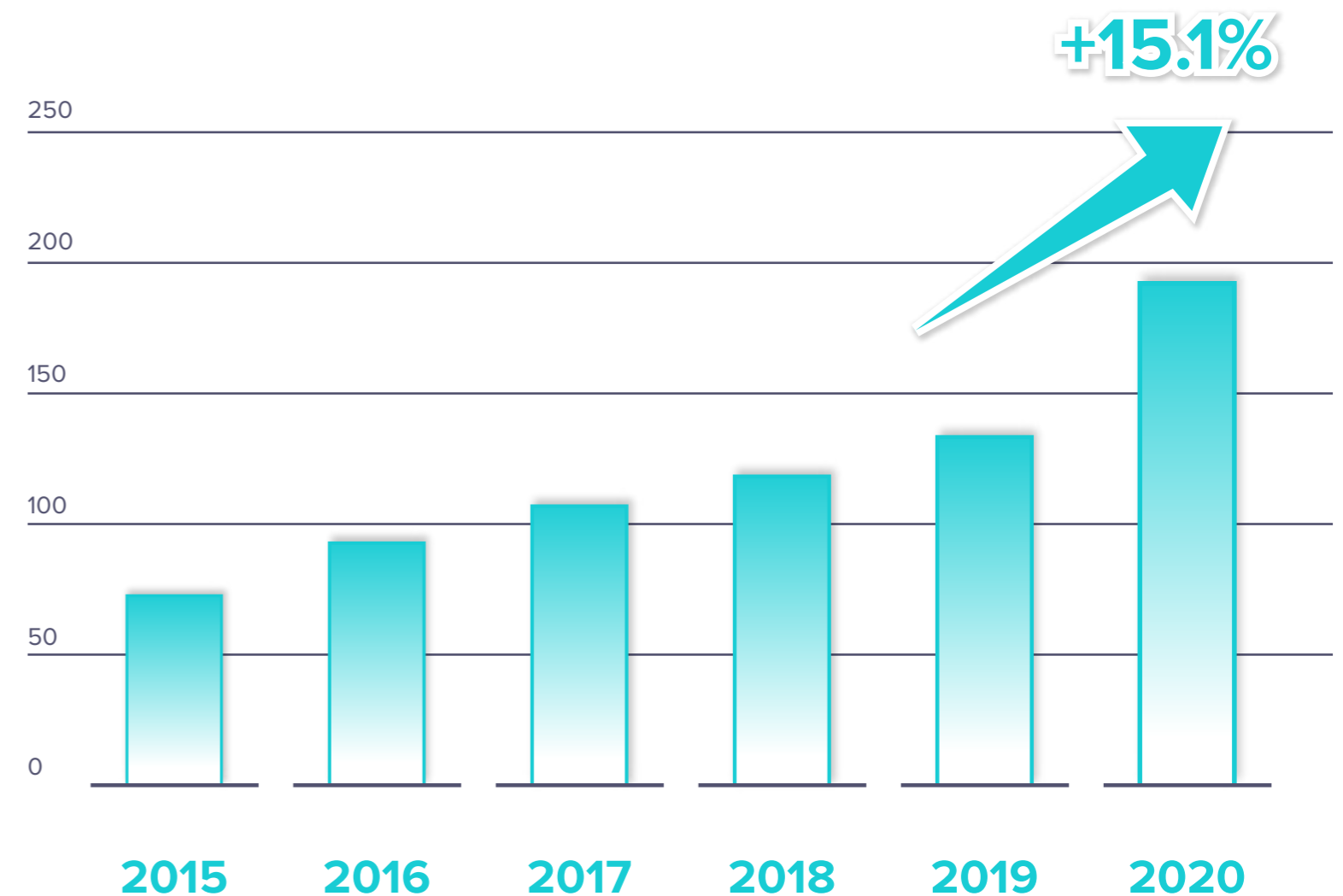
No one could have predicted 2020 and we are continuously realizing the effects of the coronavirus in many areas of society. With social distancing measures taken, people previously absent from the digital world are now becoming frequent online consumers.

For example, almost half of Baby Boomers say they increased their digital as of a May survey by CouponFollow. People who have been nudged to new online behavior won't go back to pre-coronavirus habits. This suggests that the online Holiday Shopping Season will see records never seen before.



A new generation of online consumers

Cyber Monday 2020 became the biggest online shopping day in U.S. history, hitting record online sales of over 10.8 billion U.S. dollars. A whopping 15.1% increase from 2019. That year, total holiday season e-commerce spending was projected to surpass 142.5 billion U.S. dollars. As the main contributor to the soaring sales figures, the five-day period from Thanksgiving through Cyber Monday, also known as Cyber 5, saw an estimated sales revenue of 38.2 billion U.S. dollars during the 2020 holiday season.



Data from <https://www.statista.com/>

Preparing for the holidays



60% of holiday shoppers start their shopping before Thanksgiving (November 25th) - but they keep buying until the 3rd week of December. If you're a last-minute marketer, November is the time when you need to get your ducks in a row.

According to Facebook data, the single biggest conversion peak of the year is Black Friday, which falls on the 26th of November in 2021.

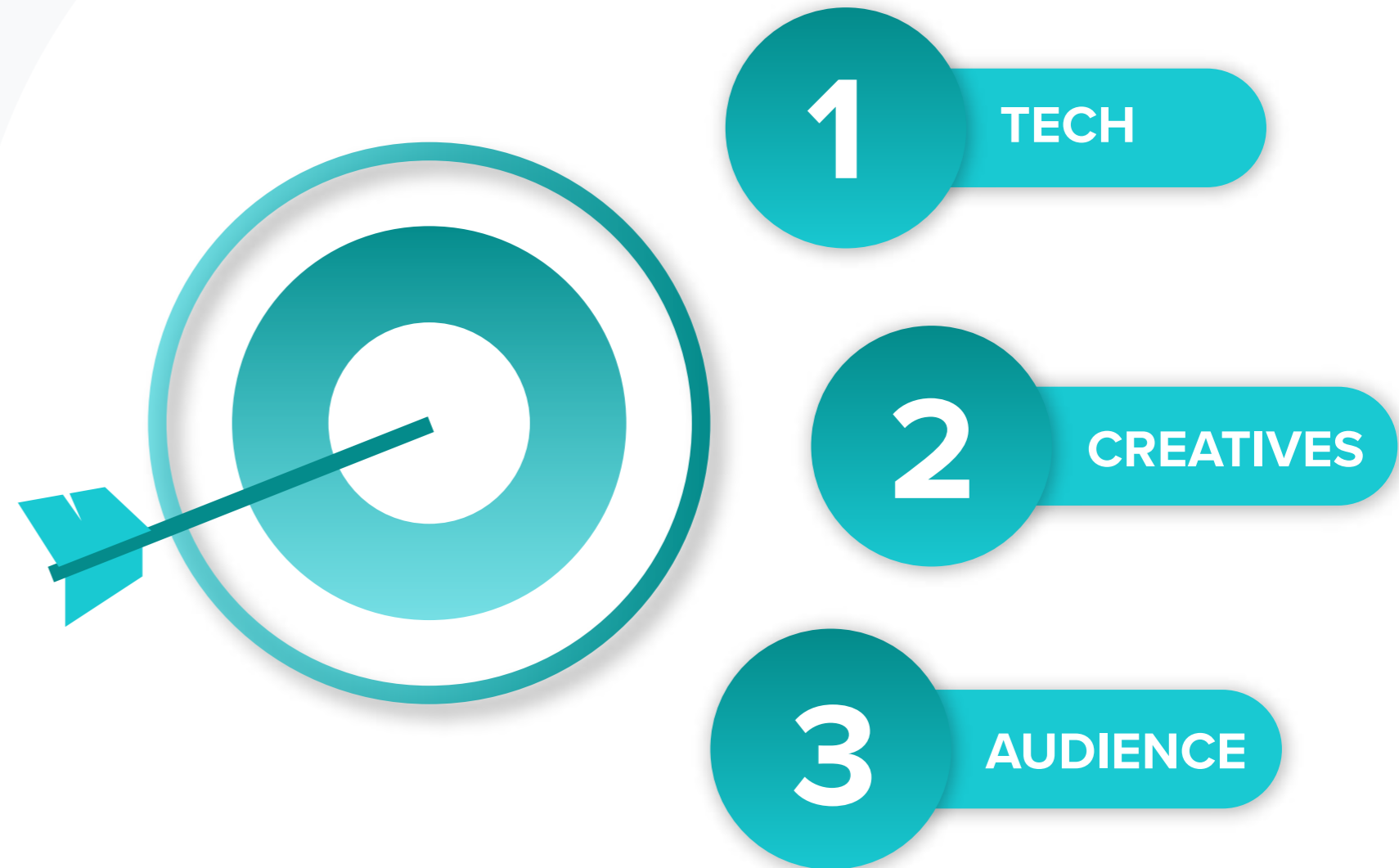
3 key things to focus on in November

1. Prep your tech and measurements

- Is your tracking properly installed to take advantage of retargeting possibilities?
- Are your landing pages ready and is there a Holiday version of them

2. Get your creatives ready

3. Start building your audience



OCTOBER

 **31** Halloween

NOVEMBER

 **29** Cyber monday

 **26** Black Friday

 **11** Singles' day

DECEMBER

 **25** Christmas

 **26** Boxing day

 **31** New Year's Eve

Prep Your Tech

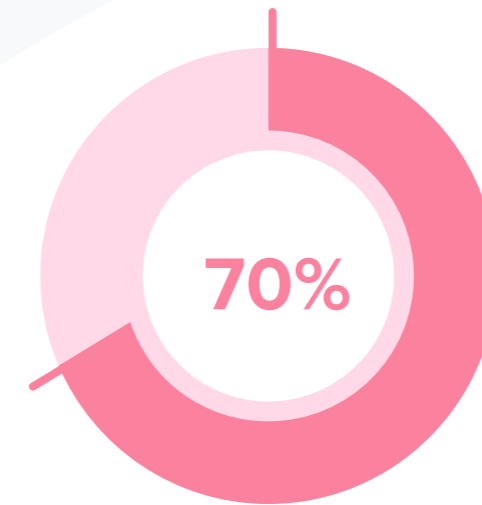
Pixels and Retargeting

You'll be driving a lot of traffic to your website during the Holiday season - and you want to take advantage of that by retargeting these visitors during and after the season. With Match2One, you can easily retarget visitors with display ads and we're happy to help you get set up with your pixel installation.

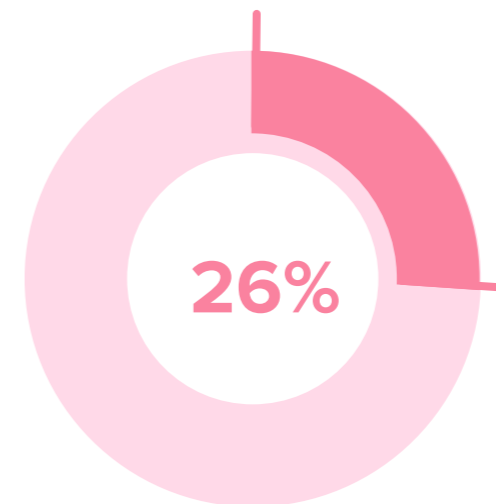
TIP

During the holidays, focus on retargeting to reach customers who've already engaged with your brand.

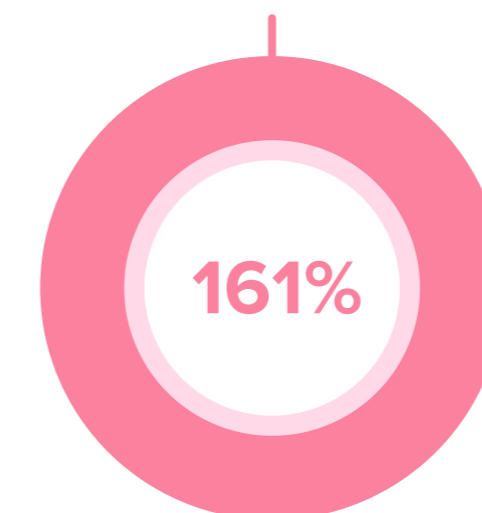
Most holiday advertising spend kicks off around Black Friday. Start your prospecting campaigns in October or early November to build up an audience at a much cheaper cost - which can then be retargeted with holiday offers once the seasons start.



Likelihood of a user to convert after being served a retargeting ad



Customers who will return to a site through retargeting



Conversion rate rise from Google remarketing campaigns

Landing pages

Don't go wild and do anything too crazy with your landing pages. Here are some true and tested tips that work well with stressed shoppers who're looking for a good deal.

Time-sensitive offers for a sense of urgency
“If I don't buy this now - I won't get another chance”



People's priorities change during the holidays. They're no-longer primarily shopping for themselves but rather focusing on gifts for



Load up on holiday-spirit!

The holidays are festive times and seeing decorations makes people feel good. If you can recreate some holiday-spirit on your landing pages, you're off to a good start!



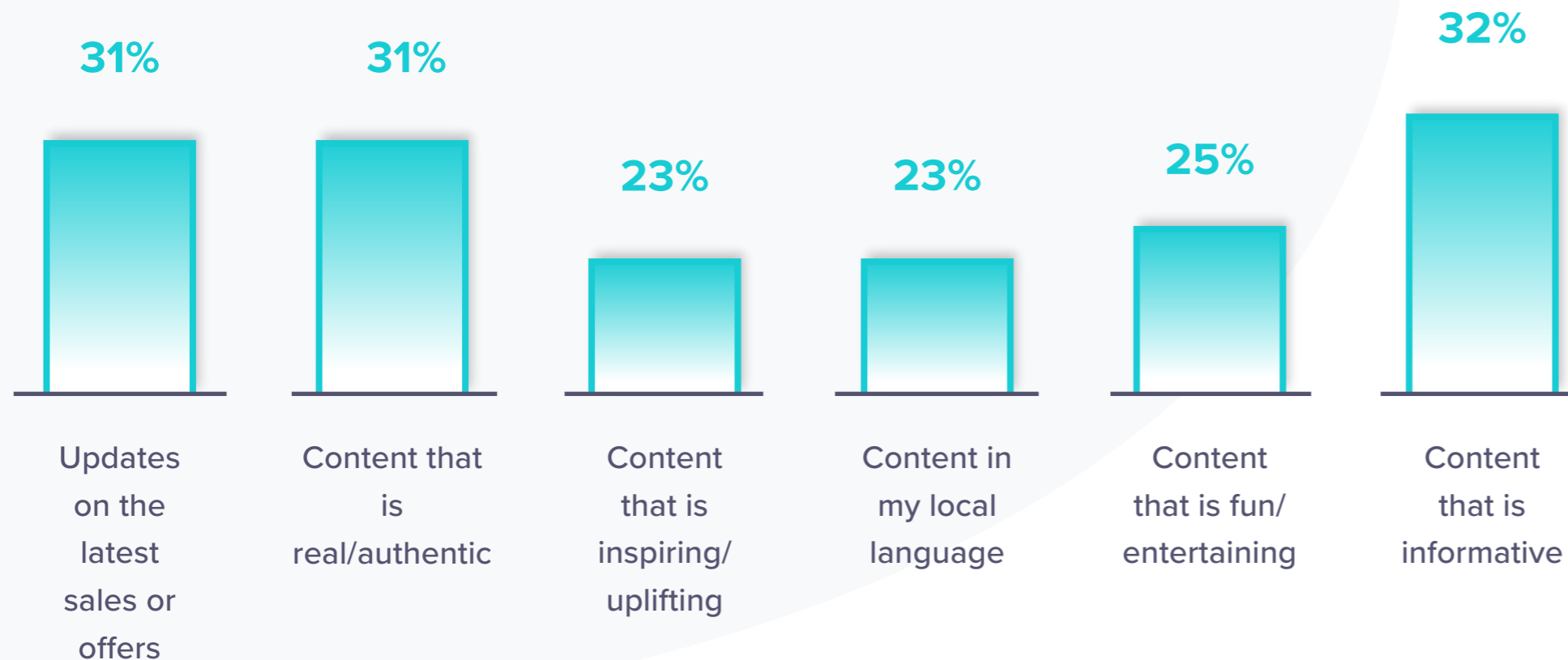
Get your creatives ready

The holidays are different from the rest of the year because people buy primarily for other people, not themselves.

This is something that's worth keeping in mind when building your holiday creatives.

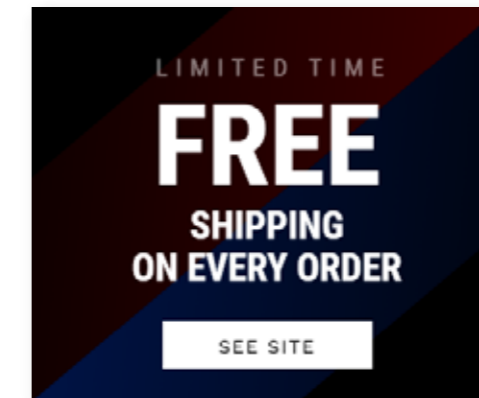
For example, have a look at this data of most frequent gift purchases:

Top activities seasonal shoppers surveyed want to see from brands on Facebook/Instagram during Christmas:



TIPS FOR CREATIVES

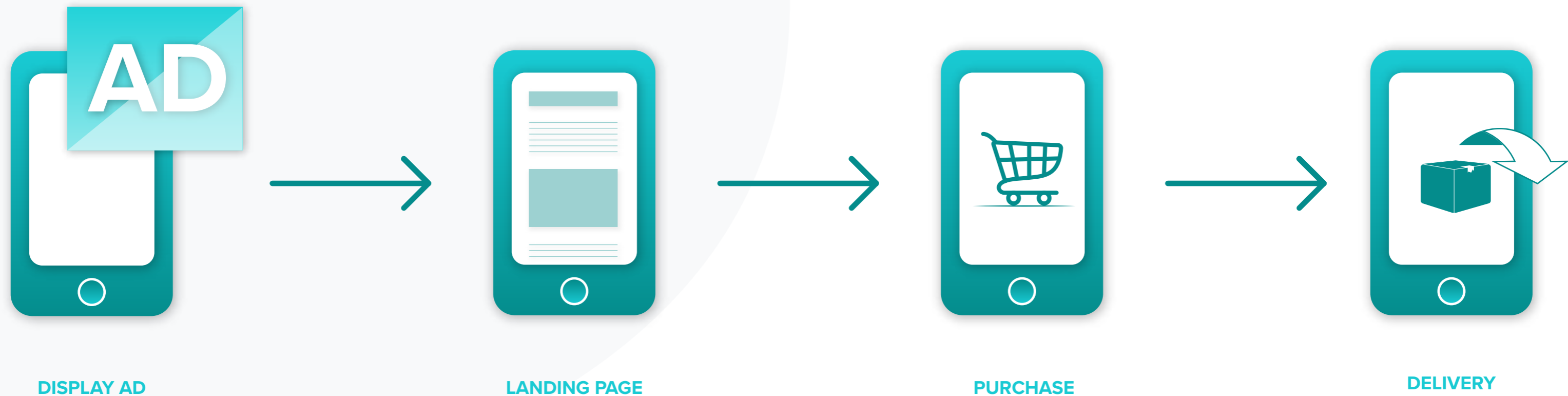
(Canva has great templates or you can use the Banner Tool in Match2One)



Test your UX

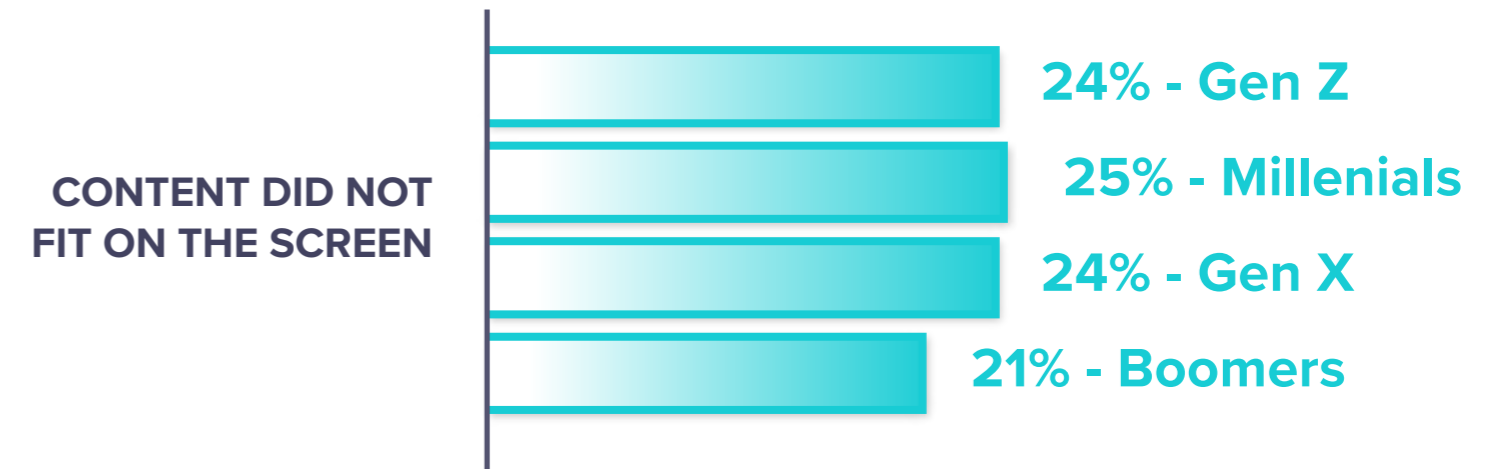
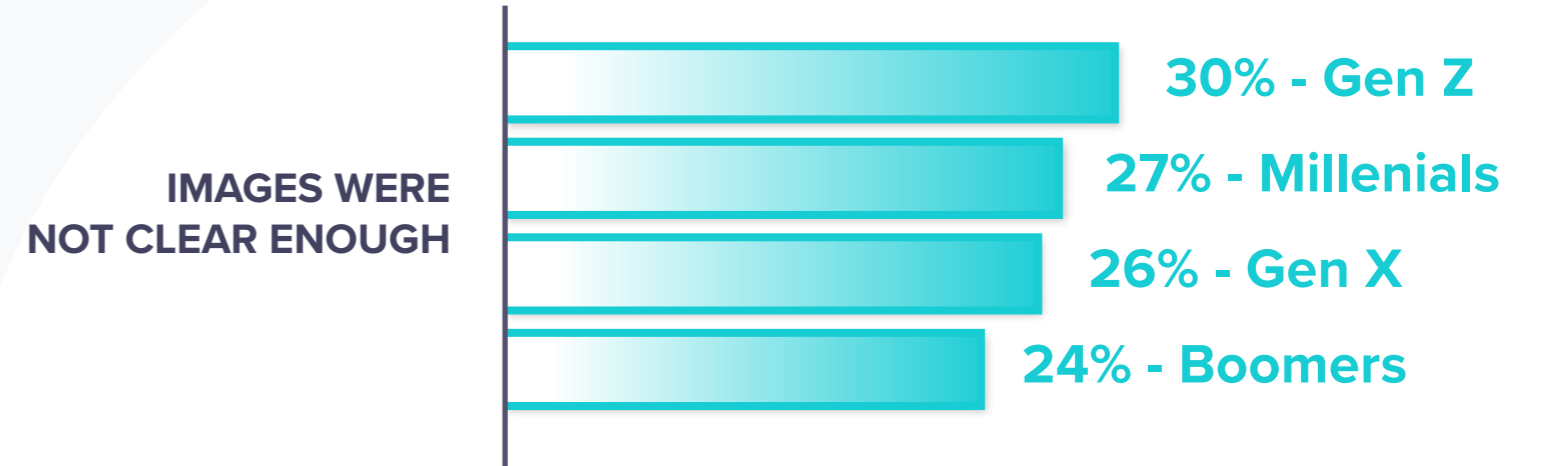
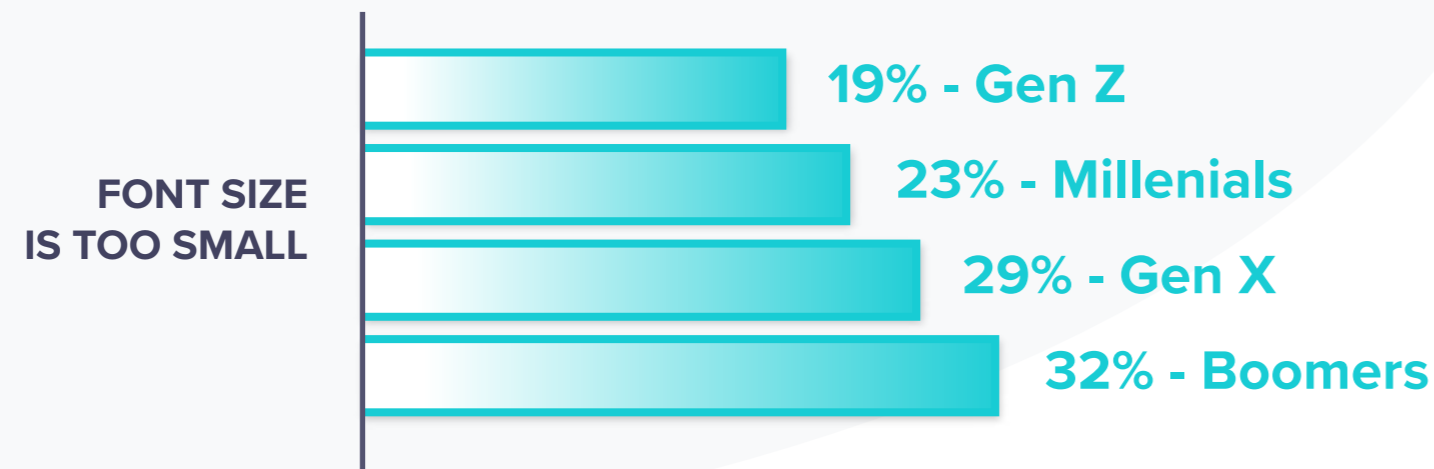
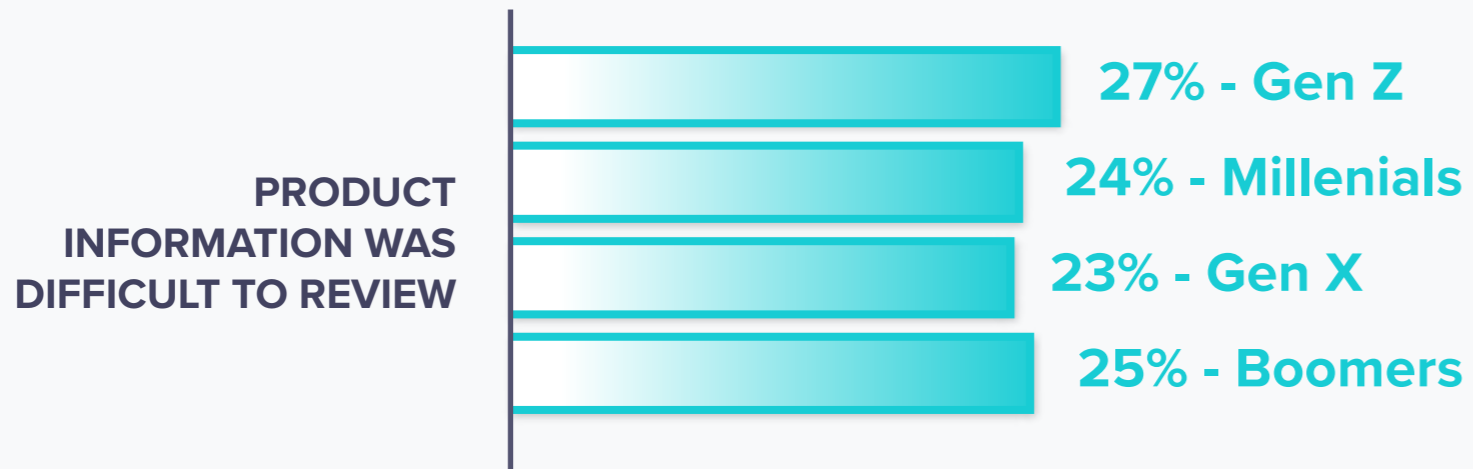
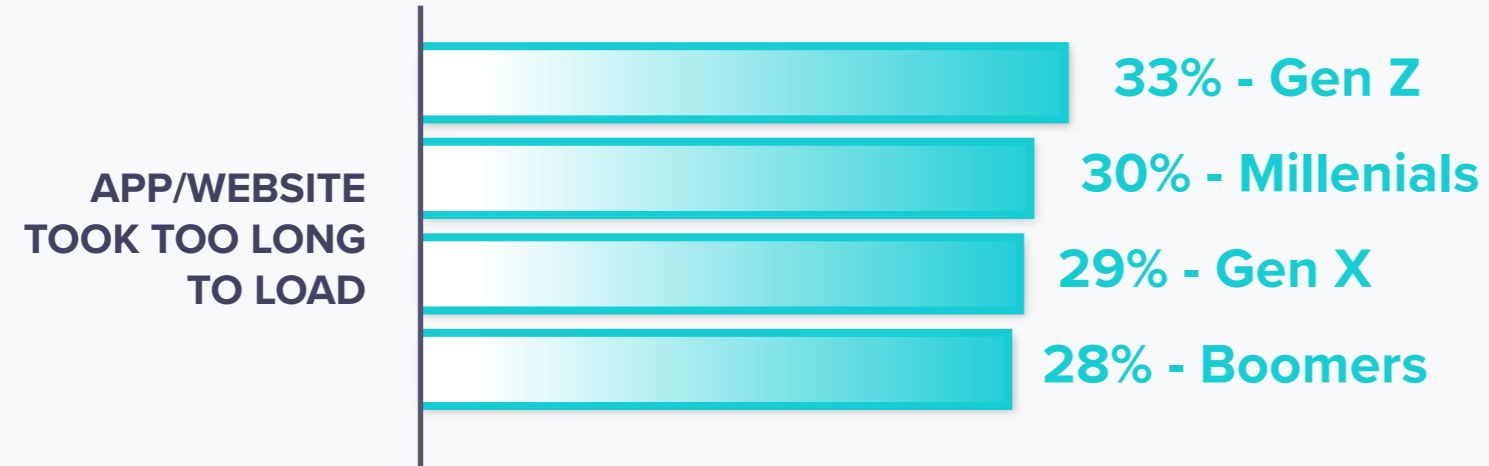
As all e-commerce brands are aware of, it's important to minimize friction from the purchasing processes. Many consumers, especially Gen X and Boomers have adopted new technologies during the pandemic.

Reducing all types of obstacles while purchasing something online is more important now than ever. Make sure to test your UX and analyze which steps are necessary and if anything could be improved.



Common UX issues

Percentage of surveyed seasonal shoppers who experienced problems while doing Christmas shopping on mobile device



Holidays CTR stats

The coronavirus has affected how we consume on the internet. Yet there are stats from previous years that are valuable and that could help in planning for the Holiday Season 2021.

An increase in sales is expected, but during Black Friday and Cyber Monday there is also an increase in click-through rates.

Black Friday and Cyber Monday had the top click-through rates (CTR) for 2019



Increase in CTR on key shopping days in 2019 compared to 2018

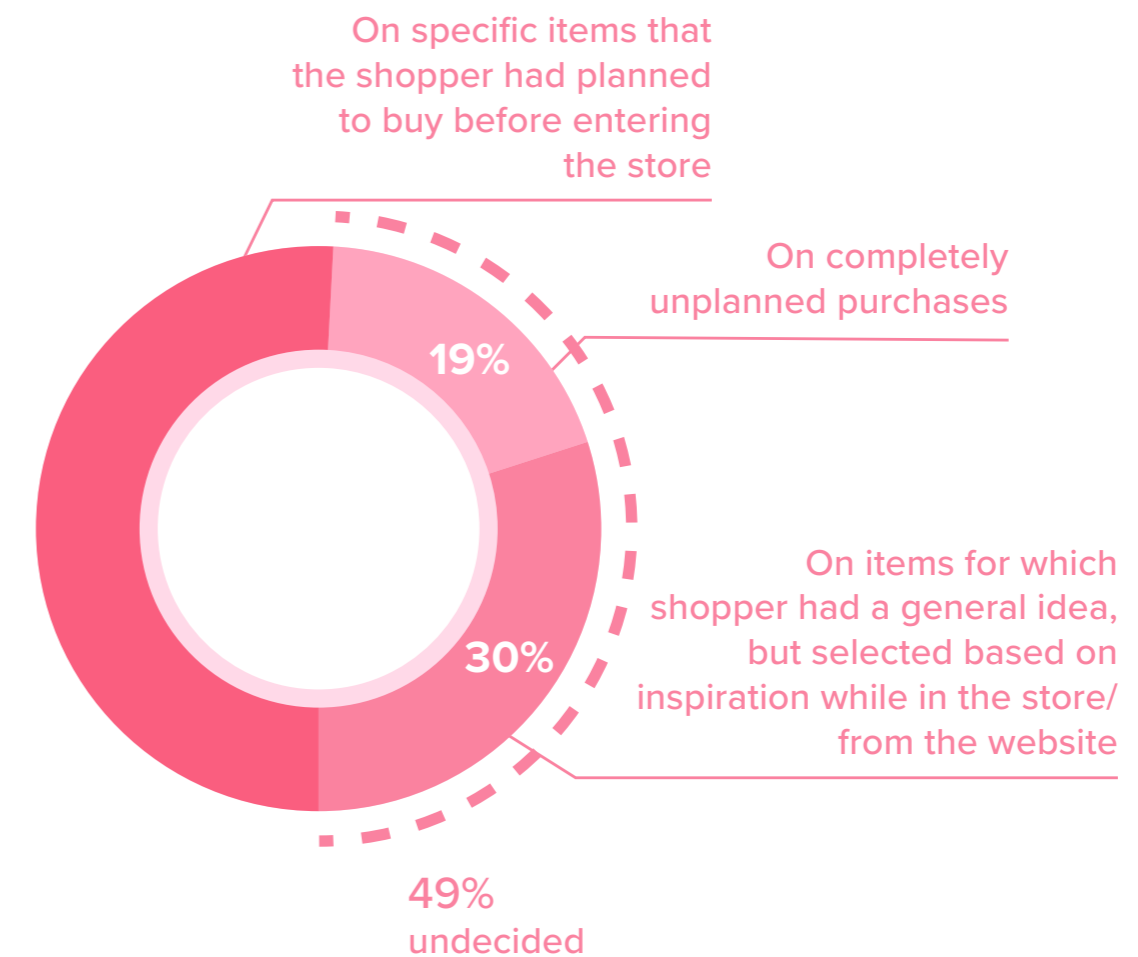


Build momentum



When shopping for the holidays, 51% of people enter a website or a physical store to buy something they'd already planned on buying.

Only 19% buy something completely unplanned - which means ideally you should start building your audience and do your prospecting before the holidays.



Scaling your audience.

For audience scaling, omnichannel is a good bet. Simply put, the goal is to be seen as much as possible - to drive curiosity and website visitors that you can later retarget with specific holiday offers.



AUDIENCE SCALING STRATEGY

Fill your bucket through broad channels that automatically find your most relevant audiences. A programmatic display campaign is a good starting point, where the goal is to start building lookalike audiences based on:

- Purchasers
- High-Value purchasers

Based on the conversion data you get from your programmatic campaigns, start building lookalike audiences with Google and Social channels. Increase your budget with these lookalike audiences, still with the goal of prospecting, to get enough data to build custom audiences.

As your omnichannel strategy brings in increasingly relevant visitors and customers, start preparing retargeting lists in these channels;

- Display (programmatic retargeting)
- Email (Still one of the highest converting and cheapest channels)
- Search
- Social

Maximize sales



With the exception of Halloween and Singles Day (11/11) - the official holiday season kicks off with Black Friday. Remember the three major conversion peaks of the holiday season and plan your advertising investments accordingly.

TIP

Start your full-on holiday season advertising efforts one week before Black Friday.

Here you'll have the possibility to A/B test products to know which one you should spend most on during Black Friday.

1

Switch to performance campaigns with your tested holiday creatives

2

Increase your budgets to maximize conversions over the holiday peaks (Target dates before and after main peaks for ROAS)

3

Ensure your creatives are reflected on your landing pages (Are you using dynamic language ads? Is your landing page localized?)

GENERAL HOLIDAY SEASON **ADVERTISING STRATEGIES**

Hopefully, by mid-November, you'll have gathered enough prospecting data to take advantage of significantly cheaper retargeting costs.

As a general rule, throughout Q4 you should focus on your best audiences:

- Purchasers: pixel + email
- Email subscribers
- Engagement audiences
- High-Value based lookalike audiences

Black week strategies

Black Monday marks the beginning of Black Week. Keep your advertising fresh by expanding your range of discounted products gradually as the week progresses, ending with a site-wide discount on Black Friday.



BLACK FRIDAY STRATEGIES

Black Friday is the top converting day of the entire holiday season. All your campaigns should be up and running, and your bids maximized.

2020's Black Friday is also an excellent opportunity to gather data for 2021's Black Friday - collect those emails!



Avoid capping your budget by setting your CPA goal to your true value - meaning what you actually earn from an average order of a particular item.

Break from tradition

Start with a larger discount between Monday and Wednesday to try and clear your stock before CPAs pick up towards the end of the week.

Sort emails collected during Black Week as a separate segment - to be used as a lookalike audience seed in 2021's holiday season.

December strategies

People's priorities shift in December.

Work slows down and you start thinking about your holiday plans.

While you might still buy things for yourself during Black Week and Cyber Monday - December is primarily about gifting. 67% of holiday shoppers still have shopping to do heading into the last week before Christmas.

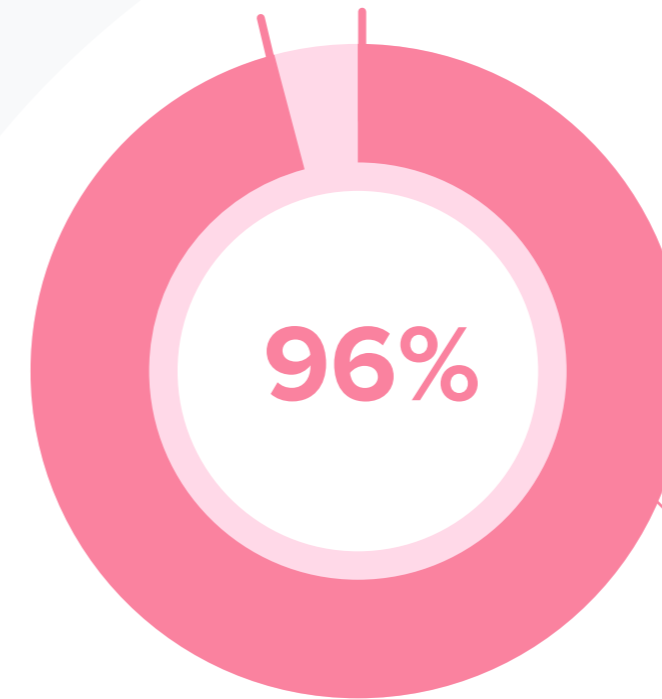
Things to try in your December campaigns:

- Gift wrapping options
- Free express shipping
- Gift cards

Closer to Christmas, things like discounts matter less, whereas logistics plays a major role in purchasing decisions.

LAST SHIPPING DAY (18TH-20TH OF DECEMBER)

Create a sense of urgency around these dates to maximize last-minute sales.



96% of US internet users said free shipping affects their purchase decisions

The maximum number of days a shopper will wait for a package with free delivery has shrunk from 5.5 in 2012 to 4.1 in 2018.



Free shipping offers make great banners for Last Shipping Day!

AFTER LAST SHIPPING DAY

In the US, the 20th of December is the last day you can get Express Shipping in time for Christmas.

The stragglers who haven't yet finished their holiday shopping will either hit the streets, or look for digital goods. This is where the power of gift cards really comes into play.

POST CHRISTMAS ADVERTISING STRATEGIES

Advertising prices see a sharp decline from the 25th of December, which gives the savvy marketer a great opportunity to get some final end-of-year sales.

Keep your retargeting on! 86% of people shopping after Christmas week searched for holiday-related shopping online.

Flush with a crisp \$20 from grandma and needing a break from family - people sneak off to a quiet corner to do some post-Christmas shopping.

This brings us to the last phase of the holiday season - Post-Holiday sales.

TIP

E-Commerce brands should focus on digital gifts like gift cards or downloads to extend the Christmas season past Last Shipping Day.



Campaigns with discounted digital cards is an excellent way of capturing those last undecided's who'd otherwise have to leave their home and go looking for gifts offline (ugh).

Post holiday sales



Generally, your post-season audience can be divided into two segments:

- Those who bought something from you
- Those who DIDN'T buy anything from you

There are different strategies and opportunities with both of these segments.



PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T BUY

Let your retargeting bucket do its thing. If you've set your pixels, you should now have a pool of people who almost made a purchase but never made it all the way there.

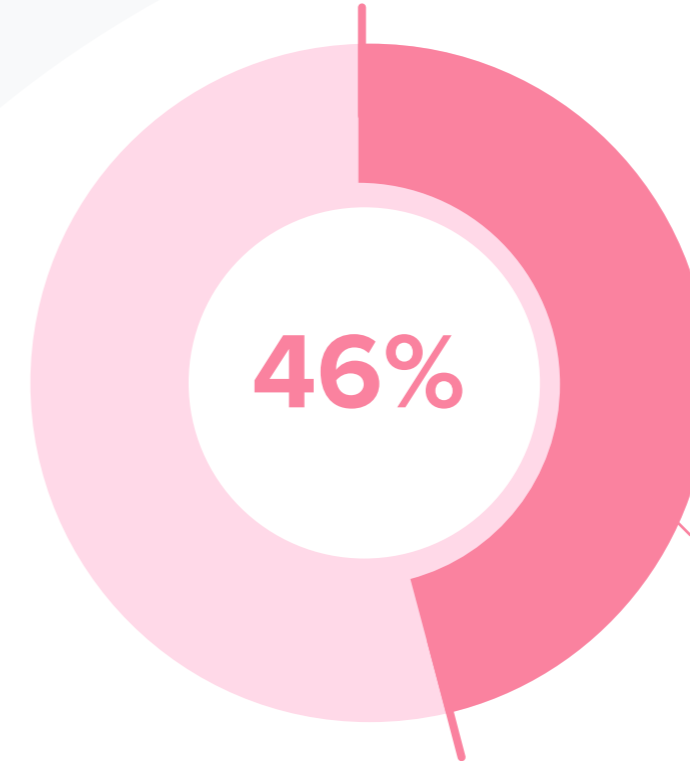
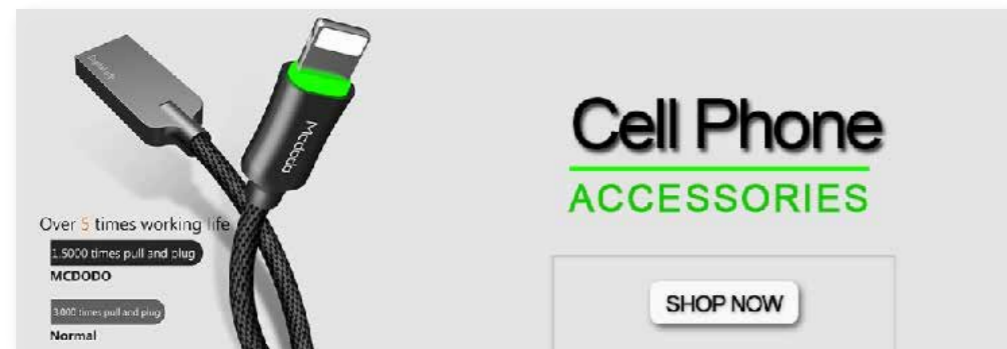
Some might, for instance, have seen something that would suit themselves, but wasn't quite right as a gift.

As they've recently been paid and have time on their hands while being off from work - this is an excellent opportunity to remind them that you exist.

PEOPLE WHO ALREADY BOUGHT SOMETHING FROM YOU

Imagine someone bought an iPad from you during Cyber Monday - wouldn't this be a perfect opportunity to upsell them with an offer for an extra charger or a nice cover?

Accessories are generally high-margin, low-cost items - perfectly suited to take advantage of the cheap advertising prices in January.



of shoppers say they shop in January to make advantage of additional holiday sales

Facebook IQ: "Facebook Holiday 2016 Study" by IPSOS Marketing

TIP

Fire off a retargeting campaign with a discounted offer - labeled as an end-of-year sale. You should be able to take advantage of falling advertising prices and see good engagements.

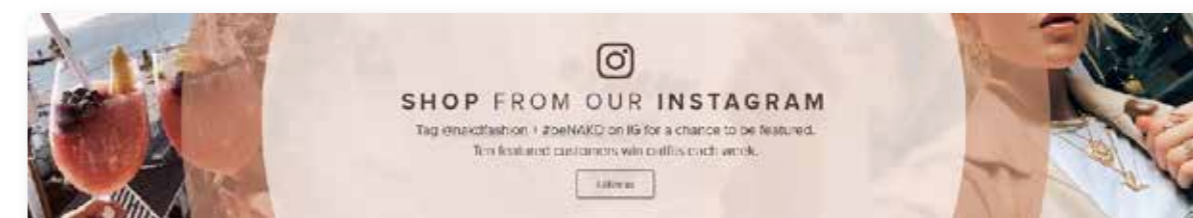
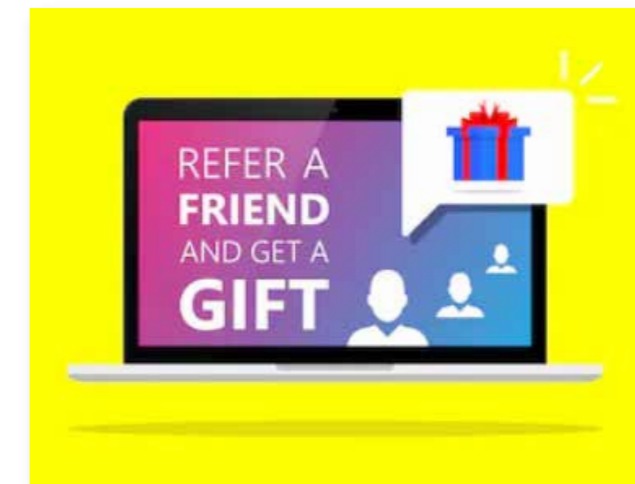
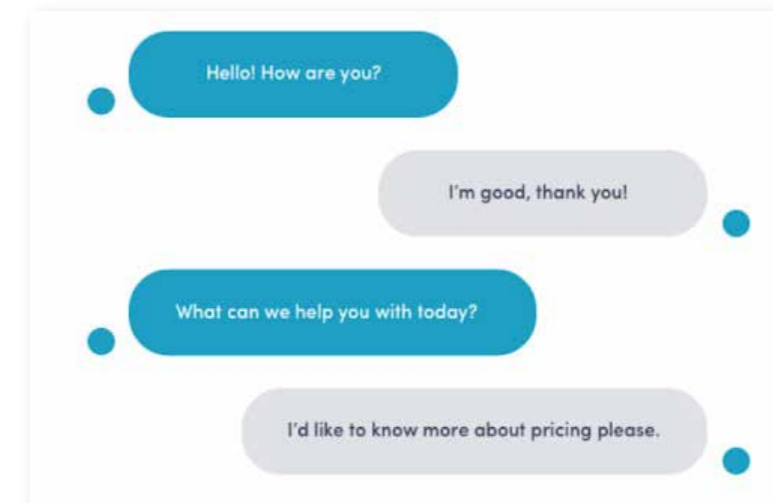
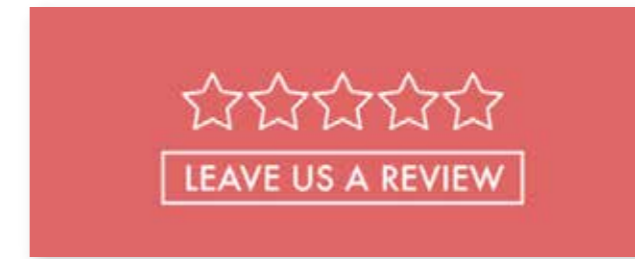
EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS

- Use email campaigns to ask for reviews in exchange for a gift card. Here's an excellent guide on review emails.
- Messenger campaigns can show off your exceptional level of customer service.
- Refer-a-friend programs is a good way to create some high-quality brand ambassadors.
- Ask customers to create their own content with your products to generate social media material.

By having these mechanics in place you'll enter the year stronger on all fronts - which makes for an even more successful 2021 season!

TIP

Engage new customers collected during the holiday season with incentivized offers to help expand your business.





Conclusion

For many retailers and eCommerce stores, the holiday season is the biggest sales event of the year.

Competition is fierce and advertising costs more than double.

With good planning and a robust retargeting strategy, you can keep costs down while making sure you only engage your most relevant audience, who's most likely to make a purchase.





Have a record sales
Holiday!



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