

The Omnichannel Guide to **Revenue-Driving Holiday Customer Engagement**



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“There's no winning holiday strategy out there that doesn't incorporate every single member of an organization. [...] **Every single person needs to know and understand the importance of holiday.** Not just from sales. If you do everything else right, the sales will come. Holiday is, for us, making magic every day. [...] So in order for us to deliver that customer experience, we need to make sure that we are running on all cylinders and we're well prepared, we're well organized, **we've thought of what the customer's most important needs are**, and we are out in front of them each and every time.”

Elizabeth Preis, CMO

ANTHROPOLOGIE

Each year, the holidays spark a surge in consumer shopping. New and existing customers will be flocking to your brand (and your competitors) with their wallets open, ready to spend, looking for good products and great deals.

Meanwhile, your business leaders expect to see healthy boosts in customer growth and revenue during this busy time. They're entrusting you, the marketer, to do what it takes to attract new customers, re-engage existing customers, and provide the frictionless, satisfying shopping experiences that will encourage shoppers to buy and win their loyalty for the long haul.

For you, the holidays aren't a time for whimsical inspiration or pie-in-the-sky marketing ideas. It's a time to exercise your expertise and creativity to drive conversions, grow your database of customers, and make a positive impact on the bottom line.

You need a holiday customer engagement strategy that delivers real business results.

This guide is designed to give you the proven tips, insights, and marketing tactics leveraged by real-life brands to ensure customer growth and revenue during the critical holiday season. Use this information to help build your own holiday customer engagement strategy that will satisfy both your customers and your business.



Holiday Readiness

Tips for better customer engagement before,
during, and after the holiday shopping season



"So as we look toward Black Friday, it's really [about] getting out in front of it. It's really **all about the consumer**. [...] It's less about Black Friday, Cyber Monday, Cyber Week, and it's **more about a collective Q4 and holiday season**, and how do we just maximize that and make sure that we're **not leaving any money on the table**? So I think that's really our biggest takeaway... That's how we're coming up with our strategy."

Lindsay Ball, Director, Direct To Consumer (DTC)

Instant Brands



"We actually **start Black Friday days before Black Friday**, and we have done that for the last couple of years, and it's been a huge success. If I could give any advice, then it's not to start Black Friday on Black Friday. Start it days before. We have a week[-long] Black Friday, and [...] **it's the best season of the year**."

Marianne Colding Oxholm, Head of CRM & Retail Marketing

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Pre-Holiday Tips

Whether it's playing sports, performing on a stage, or even just giving a presentation to your team, often your performance during the moments that matter are influenced by how you prepared before the big event. The same is true for your holiday customer engagement efforts.

If you want to achieve great success during the holidays, you'll have to put in some preparation beforehand to maximize your results. Here are a few pre-holiday tips to set you up for success.



Test your discounting in advance

Test discounts across different segments and channels so you can determine which audiences are most price sensitive, and which channels offer the best conversion. This will help you avoid over-discounting and eroding your margins during the holidays.



Fine-tune your automations

Automations will be essential in helping you deliver 1:1 personalized experiences across all channels at scale. Test automations early on to work out any kinks, and optimize accordingly. That way, you're not having to course correct during — or worse, after — the big shopping days.



Lean into progressive profiling

Progressive profiling before the holidays will help you gather vital first-party data to improve your ability to personalize your customer's shopping experience during and after the holidays. Start early to gradually collect information from your customers over time, rather than asking for too much info at once.



Take advantage of holiday wishlists

Setting up a wishlist is simple and can open up more opportunities for engagement with customers and prospects — many of whom will be “window shopping” or gathering gift ideas. Letting customers save items reduces friction and increases the likelihood they'll return later to complete a purchase.



"We know it's proven time and time again, **if we can get our consumers to actually interact with us as a brand in multiple ways**, and [...] whether that's getting you from only our website or only our partner's website or only our partner store, etc., if we can get you to interact with us in any other way, we know you're a **more valuable customer** to us. And ultimately, yes, from a business side, it's a benefit to us, but more importantly, **it's a benefit to our consumers**. We call them our fans. It's a benefit to them."

Josh Ehren, Global Head of Direct to Consumer

Gibson

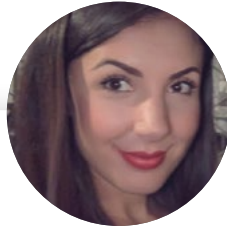
During-the-Holidays Tips

Black Friday, Cyber Monday, that final day for express shipping before Christmas, and everything in between — there are so many days throughout the bustling holiday shopping season when customers will be clamoring to get their hands on your goods or services. Once you've done the groundwork to prepare for these moments, you'll next need to focus on maximizing your marketing performance *during* those days. Here are a few tips to make sure you drive the best results possible.



Create and deliver experiences that give value

Many customers will be buying from your brand. But if the experience is merely transactional, they might forget you the minute they click “Buy Now.” Give them something in exchange for shopping with you that they can't get anywhere else — smooth and frictionless checkout; highly relevant personalization; priority customer service (e.g., free returns, free shipping); or any other perk that makes them feel special.



"Mobile is the key to bridging channels. The reality is that most e-comm sales are going through the mobile channel, and while in-store, customers are on their phones. In fact, mobile made up the majority of last year's cyber five ecomm sales for the first time—and **that share is only predicted to grow for the 2023 holiday season.** Retailers will want to push app activity; Movable Ink can help support this with device targeted banners to properly drive customers to download the app. We can also target customers with messaging to enable notifications if that opt-in data can be passed to us."

Becki Francis, Director of Client Strategy

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Target limited-time holiday customers

Some customers shop with your brand only during the holidays. Make the most of your limited-time holiday customers and use segmentation to treat these audiences accordingly. For example, you'll have last-minute shoppers, back-again shoppers, and your loyal customers who are only active during the holidays. Use personalized discounts or incentives to reach this special group of customers.



Go omnichannel to meet customers wherever they're at

During the holidays, you can't afford to miss an opportunity to engage. Maximize the breadth of channels you use in your marketing strategy so you can reach the widest audience possible. But don't stop there — ensure your channels (and data) are fully unified so customers can have a consistent and seamless holiday shopping experience with your brand even as they move from channel to channel.

Post-Holiday Tips

The holidays may have been a success, and perhaps you hit all your key metrics and goals — but that isn't the end of the season for you. You still have the opportunity to further accelerate business results. You can keep the success rolling with a strong post-holiday customer engagement strategy to retain the customers you gained and maximize revenue after the big shopping days have passed. Consider the following tips:



Leverage referrals to grow your contacts

Referral programs like a “refer-a-friend” campaign can have a massive impact on customer growth. You’ve done your job at delivering a world-class shopping experience, empowering your customers to rave about your brand. Use incentives like limited-time coupons or reward points to drive referrals.



Reward holiday shoppers to foster long-term loyalty

Your holiday shoppers could have chosen any brand to shop with, but they chose yours. Reward these customers with meaningful engagements and experiences that bring them back to shop with your brand again. For example, thank new and returning shoppers with a personalized voucher or coupon. Offer early access to post-holiday sales events, or even exclusive seasonal items — anything that makes them feel valued and special.



Prioritize retention and nurturing your new customers

Your relationship with newly won holiday customers will be in its early stages, so you'll want to make a good impression. Navigate any returns with grace, making them as easy and frictionless as possible so that customers are likely to come back to your brand. Extend new customers' journey with engagement that continues the conversation — think post-purchase reviews, invitations to join loyalty programs, newsletter sign-ups, and more.



"A customer-obsessed organization, potentially like ourselves, understands that **our customers have different preferences and expectations** when they want to interact with us. And [through our] omnichannel perspective and being customer centric, we should be able to **offer them whatever experience they want in any channel**. [...] So we need to understand that same [customer] may be in one of our stores [or] may have shopped with us online last week. We can pull up their preferences. We can look at past history. We can look at any other kind of tailored data that we may have on them [and] **drive that relationship with the customers to [create] that seamless customer journey.**"

Gareth Hughes, Technology Director, Estée Lauder

ESTÉE LAUDER



"Many brands struggle **after the holiday season** **because they use discounts** to attract a huge number of new customers [that don't] return to make another purchase. This can lead brands to do even **more costly discounting to win them back**, or spending precious budget to 're-acquire' them on paid channels. Instead, brands need to encourage and track word-of-mouth recommendations to identify the valuable advocates in their customer base. **Referred customers have a 2x higher lifetime value** and are 5x more likely to refer onwards, driving sustainable organic growth without extra budget. And once you've identified your advocates, you can use these insights to tailor your segmentation and contact strategy so you're **keeping them engaged and maximizing revenue.**"

Kat Wray, Director of Strategic Partnerships

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Omnichannel Tactics

to bolster your holiday customer
engagement strategy



A winning holiday customer engagement strategy depends on a number of factors, with marketing tactics being one of the most critical. The specific tactics you use, the campaigns you run — these will dictate your ability to reach customers, inspire them to take action, and drive conversions that boost revenue.

Although every brand is different and has its own unique audiences, the most successful brand marketers across verticals benefit from leveraging the same essential omnichannel marketing tactics to drive holiday customer engagement. Let's dive in to explore the tactics you'll want to include in your holiday strategy to ensure growth and revenue.

1 Welcome Campaign

Recommended
Channels



Email



Web



SMS



In-App

The holidays are the most important time of year to have your welcome campaigns dialed in. That's because you'll have a surge of new customers shopping with your brand for the first time. If your goal is to build long, sustained relationships with each and every customer, first impressions matter. So make sure you get off on the right foot with a well-crafted, automated welcome campaign.

Welcome Campaign Tips



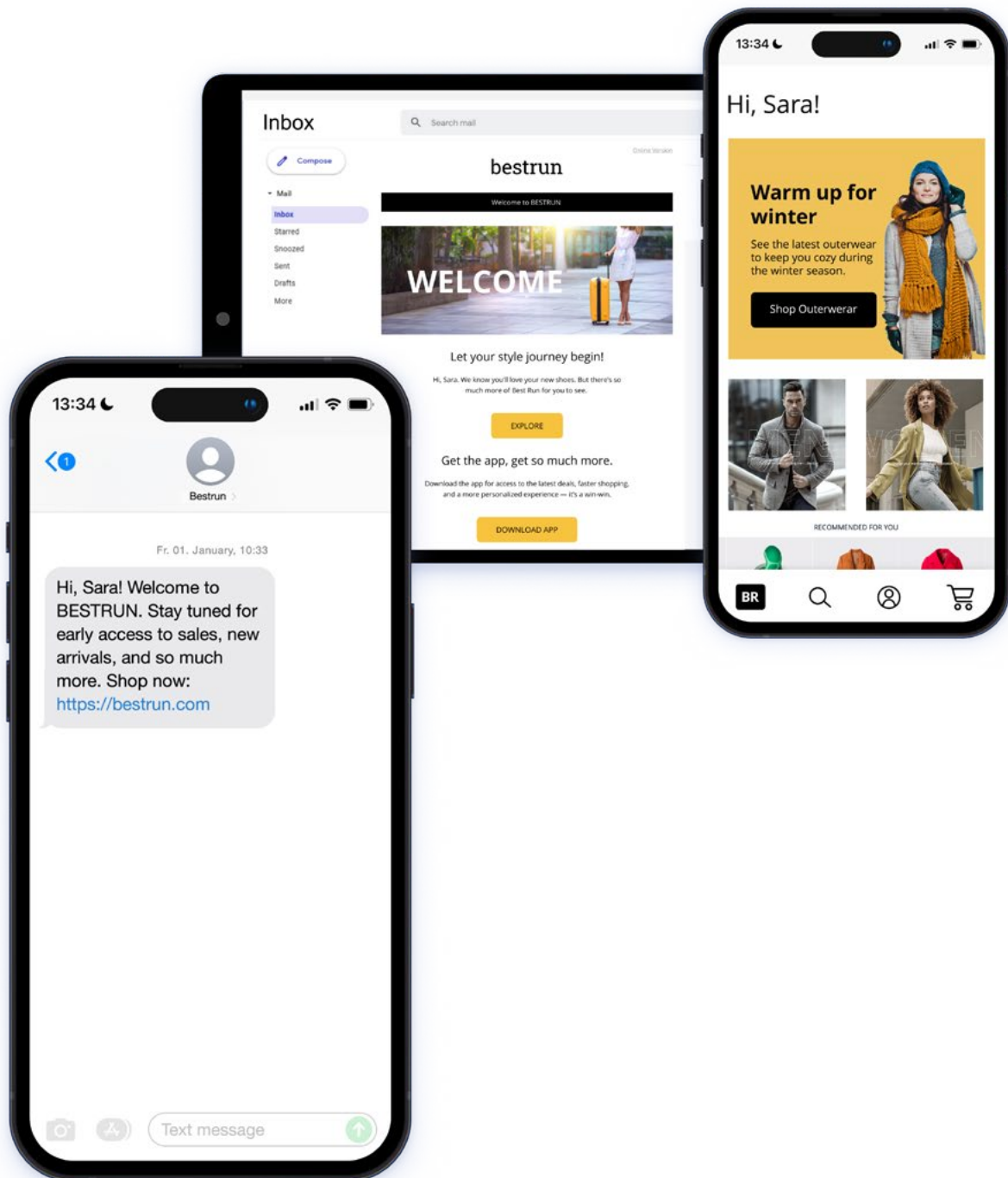
Use creative content that aligns with your brand's tone and voice (and company values) so customers get a true sense of who you are.



Welcome campaign messages should be warm and inviting, not pushy or overly sales-focused.



Use the widest breadth of channels possible so customers feel welcomed no matter which channel they prefer.



2 Abandoned Cart

Recommended
Channels



Email



Web



Digital Ads



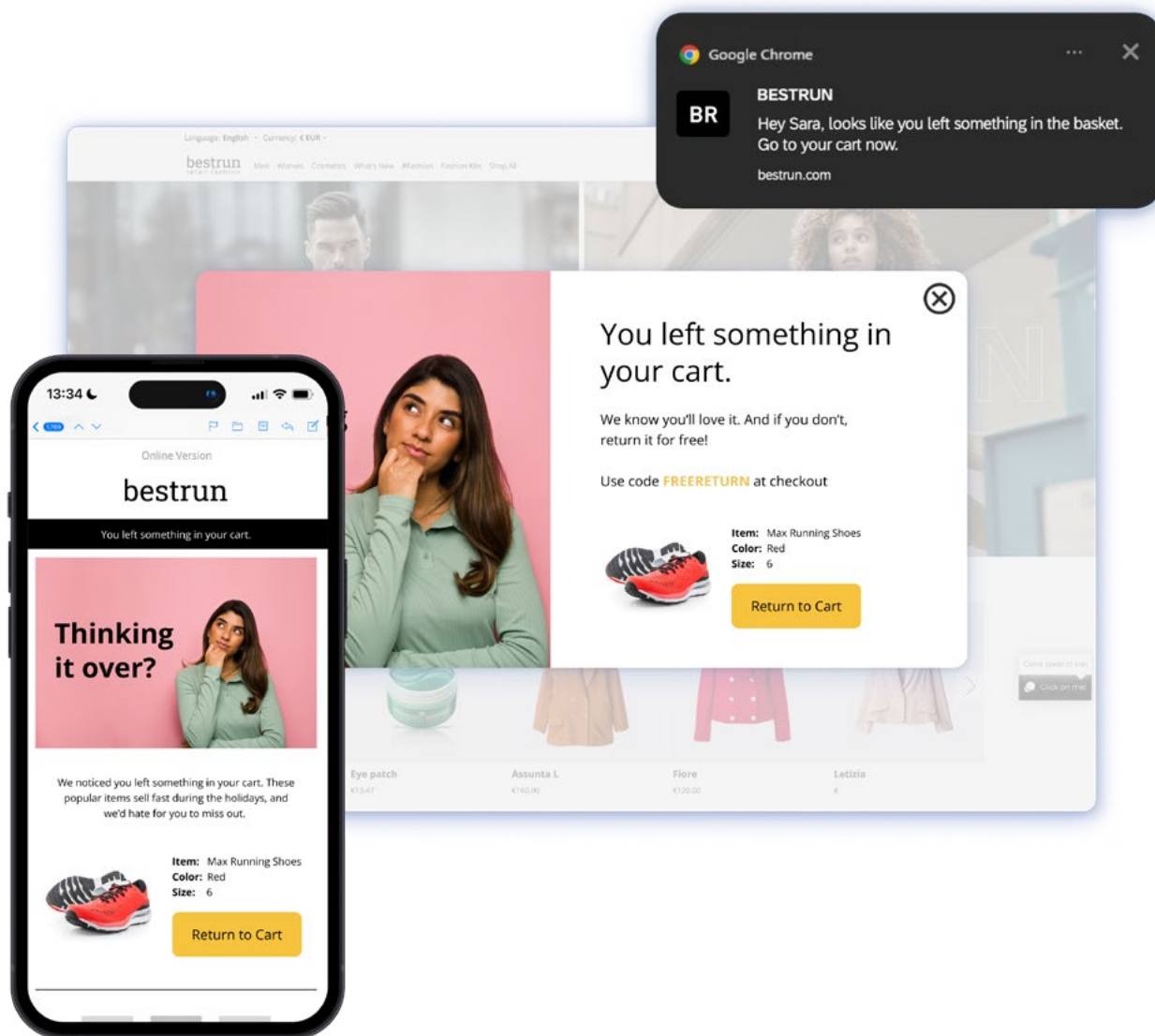
In-App

It's a quandary that has tormented many marketers since the advent of online shopping: "Why did the customer add all those items to their cart, but not complete their purchase?" Perhaps the customer became distracted, lost momentum, or balked at the final price when everything was added up. But ultimately, the reason why they abandoned their cart is less important than what you, the marketer, do to re-engage those customers.

With the influx of shoppers on your website during the busy holiday shopping season, you're bound to have an increase in abandoned carts. Abandoned cart campaigns should be a mainstay in your holiday customer engagement strategy so you can save as many of those sales as possible.

Abandoned Cart Campaign Tips

- ✓ Leverage personalization when possible to put those abandoned items front and center for the customer with a message that's tailored to the customer.
- ✓ Use a soft touch when asking for a customer to complete their purchase — if you're too blunt or pushy asking for the sale, they're less likely to be receptive.
- ✓ Automate your abandoned cart campaigns so they reach the customer at the right time for maximum impact.





"I think everyone's goal with abandoned cart is, first and foremost, to **get the right content across to the customers** and make it the most engaging email that you can. So we got to that point where we had an amazing abandoned cart message, it was **doing crazy engagement and revenue**, but it was kind of becoming stagnant. [...] Really, the only solution is to send more emails, and to send more emails, you have to capture more abandoned carts. So I think for us it was really just making sure in the rebuild of our entire e-commerce platform that we had every point within 'add to bag' to 'checkout' properly tagged and brought into Emarsys. And that, safe to say, **increased our messages sent 100% year over year.**"

Jordan Wallace, Senior Retention Manager

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3 Price Drop

Recommended
Channels



Email



Web



Digital Ads



Push

Who doesn't like to save money? The majority of your customers on any given day would be excited to find out an item they've been browsing is now reduced in price — but during the holidays, when customers are even more price sensitive, this tactic is extra potent.

Assuming your data is fully unified and product inventory updated in real time, you can automate a price drop campaign to let customers know that a product or service they've explored is now less expensive. This is especially useful to convert holiday shoppers who previously browsed your products and services while gathering gift ideas.



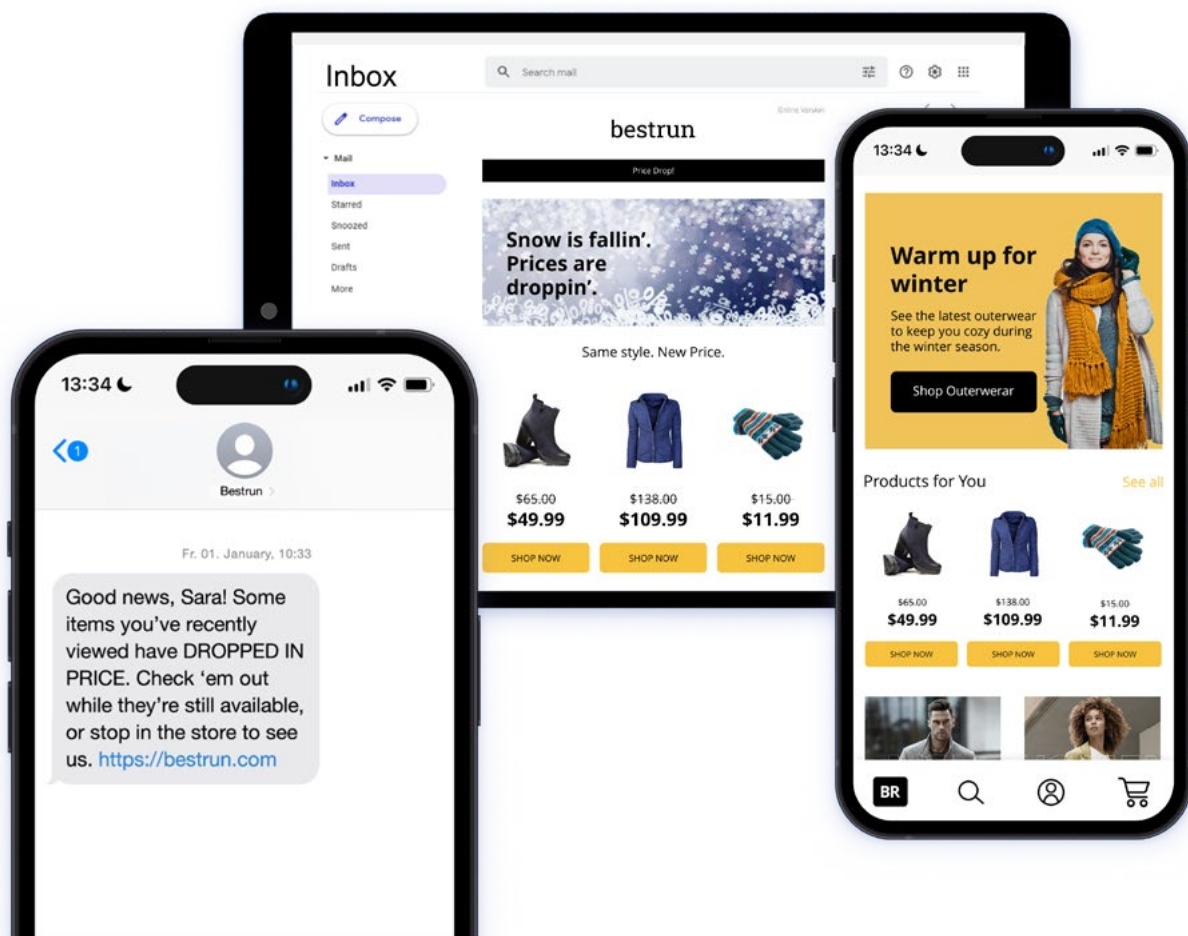
"When **Price Drop** first came in, I was so excited about it, and it was basically a no-brainer for us... [What] I love about it is the fact that **you don't have to offer [the customer] a discount** or anything for it. It's automatically giving them a notification that the thing they love is now on sale. [...] We've had some really great results across not only the conversion for price drop, but also the **engagement rates** as well."

Lara Donnelly, Former Customer Lifecycle Manager



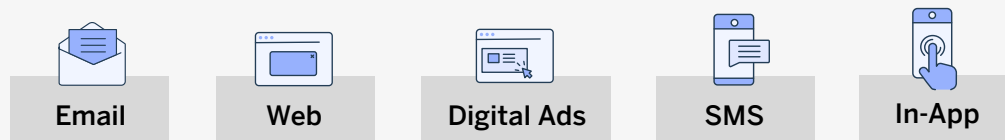
Price Drop Campaign Tips

- Go for the widest audience and utilize your full range of channels — email, digital ads, push, web, or wherever your target audiences are at.
- Price drop tactics work great with wish list items. No better time than the holidays to let a customer know that something they saved on their wish list has dropped in price.
- For greater impact, incorporate time constraints into your campaign copy. “For a limited time” or “while supplies last” will ensure customers who want this product won’t hesitate.



4 Holiday Sale Event Campaign

Recommended Channels

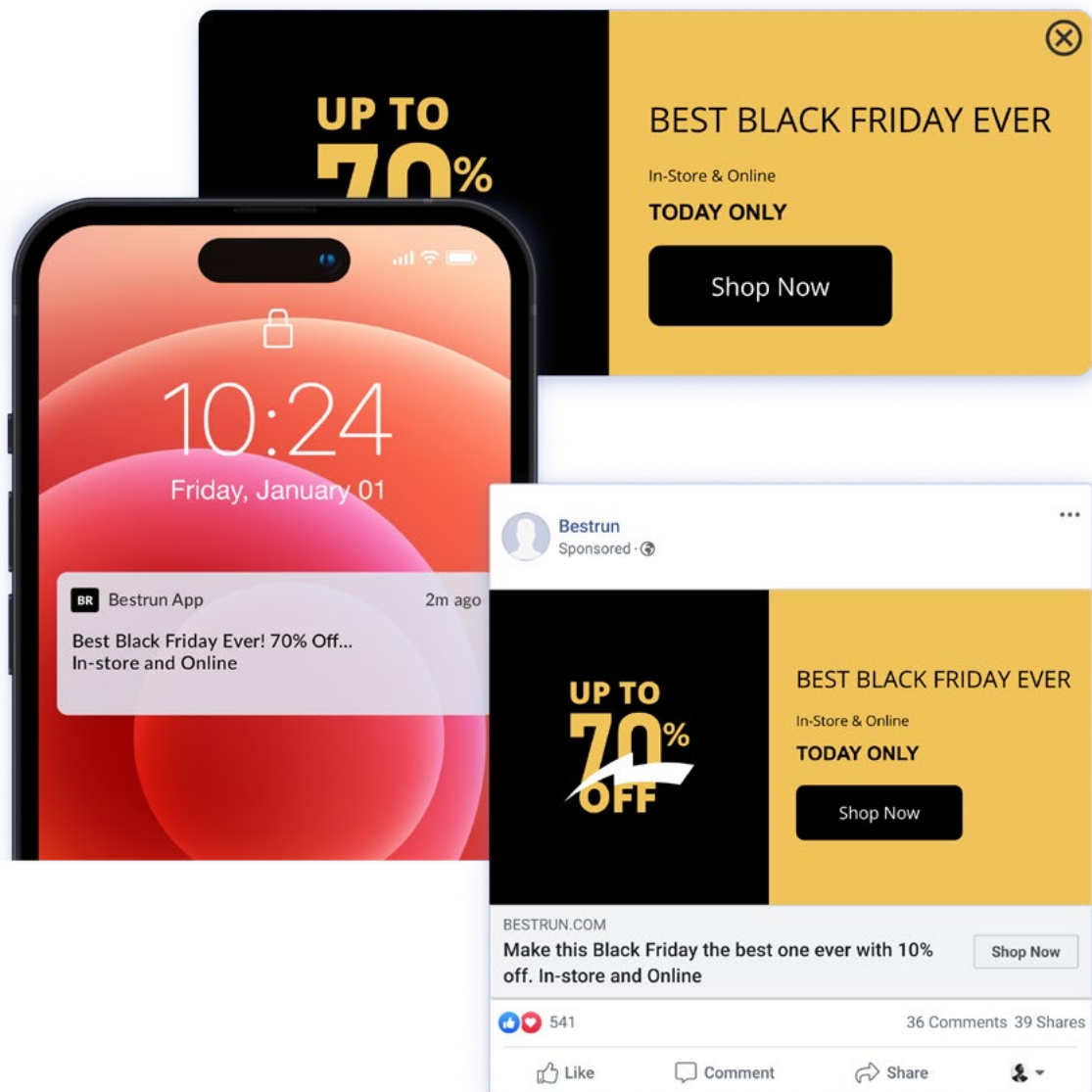


Shoppers know to expect special sales and promotional events around the holidays. But with so many other brands clamoring for your customers' attention, you'll want to make plenty of noise about your sales events to ensure you stand out from the crowd.

Don't let your holiday sales go unnoticed. Use holiday sale event campaigns to let your customers know they have a limited-time opportunity to get great products at great prices — perfect for gifts or for themselves.

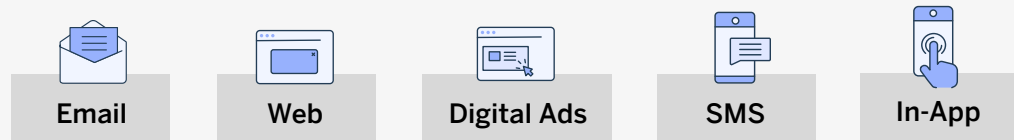
Holiday Sale Campaign Tips

- ✓ Even though your holiday sales deals may be for everyone, use personalization in your marketing when possible to ensure the recipient feels valued and appreciated.
- ✓ Your competitors are likely promoting sales of their own. Use creative copy and unique visuals so that your campaigns stand out.
- ✓ Flash sales can draw new customers to your brand, so use a wide range of channels to get the message out there.



5 Back-In-Stock

Recommended Channels

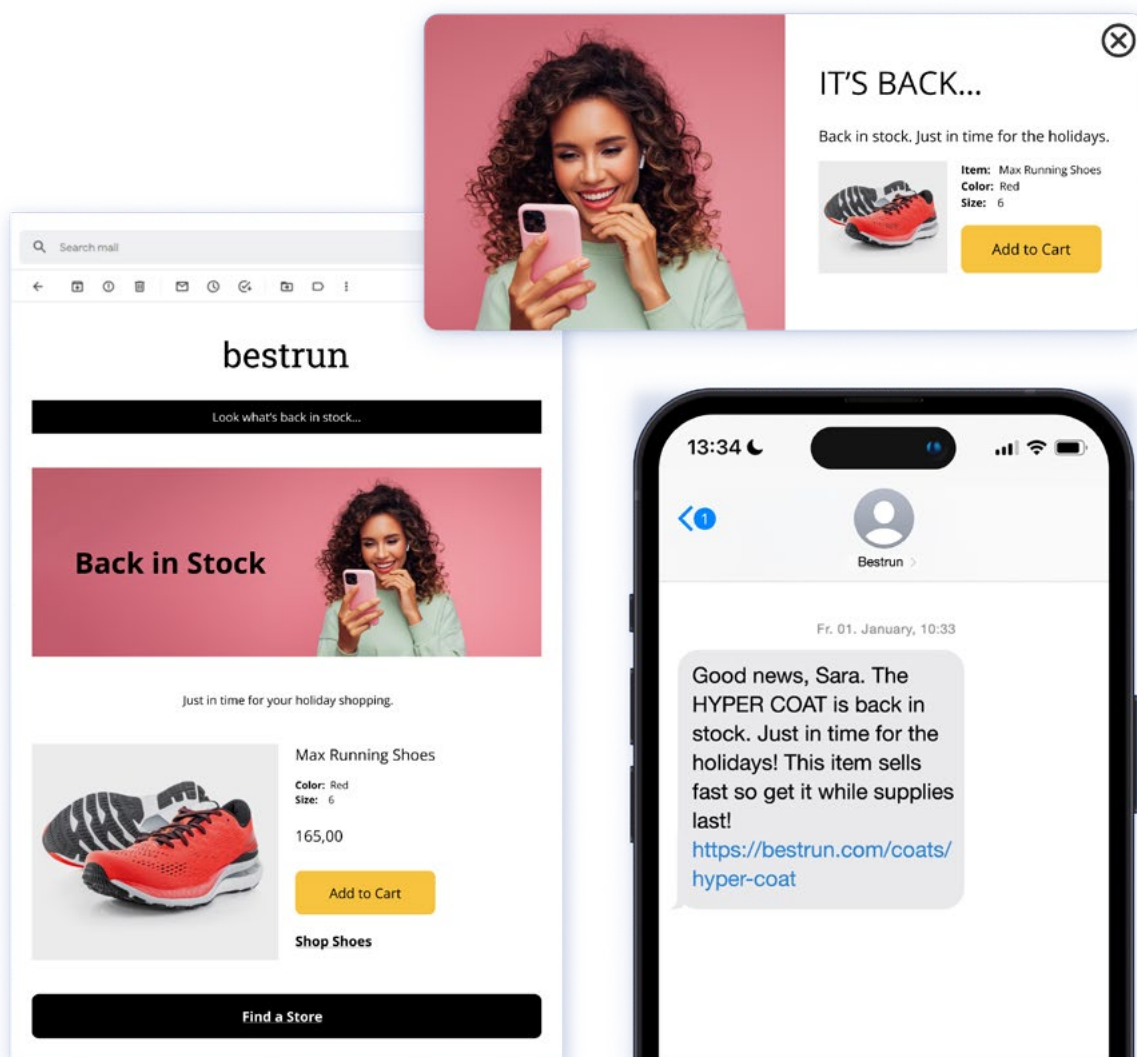


An out-of-stock product can be frustrating for a customer, especially if they're doing their holiday shopping and the one item left on their list is unavailable. You might even push them into the arms of a competitor if you can't provide the desired goods. So, as your inventory gets replenished throughout the holiday season, you'll want to notify customers right away when previously depleted products are back on the shelves.

The great thing about a back-in-stock campaign is that you're sending customers a personalized message about a product they've either already purchased previously, or have expressed interest in purchasing, but couldn't complete the transaction due to inventory. This makes it highly relevant, which means they're more likely to engage with it — and they'll also appreciate that you've kept them in mind.

Back-In-Stock Campaign Tips

- ✓ Ensure your data and channels are unified so you can send customers 1:1 back-in-stock engagements in real time
- ✓ Other items back in stock, too? A back-in-stock email is a good time to make additional personalized product recommendations to your customers.
- ✓ These same principles apply to new items as well — use your breadth of channels to let customers know when exciting new items have arrived in your inventory.



6 Personalized Mobile Wallet Coupon

Recommended
Channels



Email



Mobile Wallet



SMS



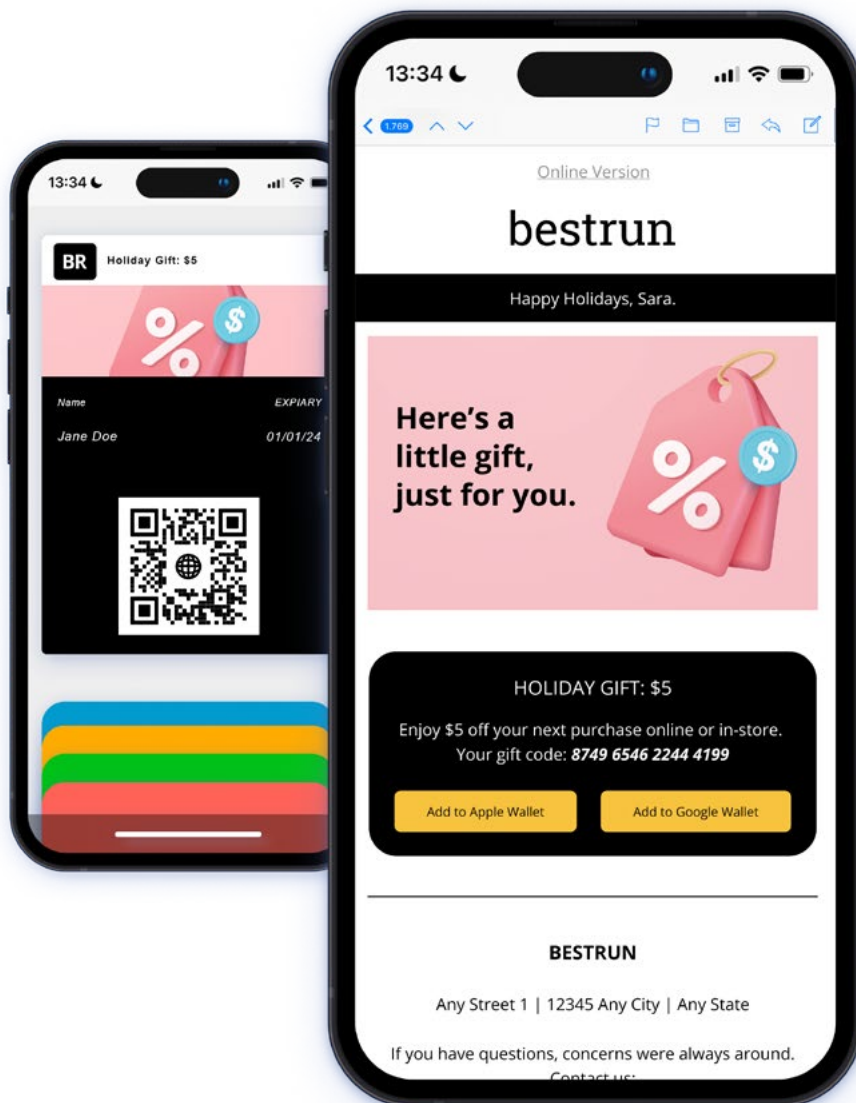
In-Store

For retailers, discounts can be a particularly powerful incentive during the holidays. Customers are looking to spend, while still being conscious of their budgets. If your brand has a holiday sale or an event happening, you can let your customer know in an impactful way and get them into your store by delivering a coupon right to their wallet... their digital wallet, that is.

More than half of consumers (51%) say there is no need for them to carry a physical wallet now that they have a mobile wallet. So a great way to reach customers is with personalized coupons on limited-time holiday offers, BOGO promotions, or other one-time-use discounts that can be added to their Google or Apple Wallet. These coupons can then be applied directly at the point of purchase when shopping in-store. Not only does this encourage customers to spend with your brand, but it also helps you identify online customers at the store level, so you can close the loop on the online-to-offline experience.

Personalized Mobile Wallet Coupon Tips

- ✓ Use email initially to connect with customers, then invite them to add a coupon directly to their digital wallet for easy and convenient in-store savings.
- ✓ Lead with value and offer the mobile wallet coupon as a way to reduce friction and make the checkout process faster — saving customers time during holiday shopping is a huge benefit!
- ✓ Gather opt-in so you can deliver future incentives directly to a customer's mobile wallet. Use SMS to deliver reminders to opted-in customers who haven't used their coupon yet.





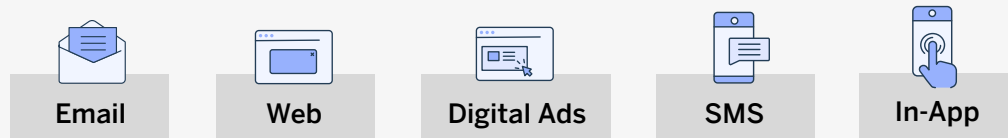
"We have **SMS campaigns** that are going to be supporting contacts with pushes. If they're near our stores, [they] might see a [holiday] push notification. But we are on other non-traditional channels as well, such as Waze. Waze is a channel we've been exploring over this past year for all the Super Savers Club [members], which is our loyalty program marketing. We've been able to **identify contacts that travel to our stores** and [we're] able to put out push notifications [...] as people are driving by our stores. We have also explored putting in **unique coupon offers** in those Waze ads that can be essentially captured and then **saved to a mobile wallet, and then redeemed in our stores** in order to truly track what that conversion is, versus what they see, versus coming into a store and transacting. "

Adam Bressler, Senior CRM and Email Marketing Manager



7 First-Time to Repeat Buyer

Recommended Channels



The holiday season isn't just about selling to as many one-and-done shoppers as you can. It's also about building relationships that lead to more loyal customers and increasing customer lifetime value.

But you don't have to wait until after the holidays to start the nurturing process. Automate first-time to repeat buyer campaigns across multiple channels, and incorporate personalization tokens so that the content your first-time buyers receive following their holiday-time purchase is highly relevant and meaningful. A personalized recommendation is much more likely to drive that crucial second purchase that nudges a customer further along their journey with your brand.



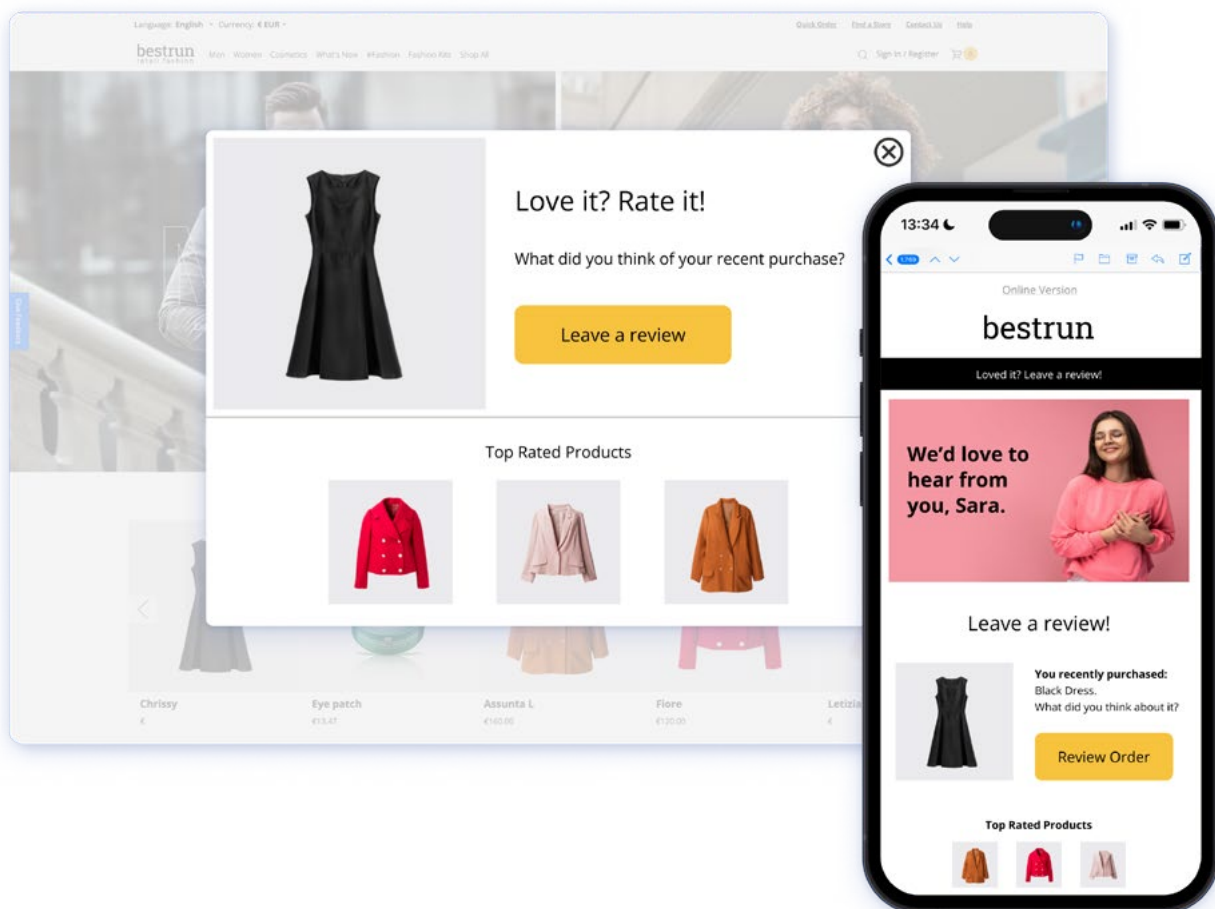
"It's obviously a lot **easier to retain a customer** rather than win them back once they've disengaged and become inactive. So we really want to be able to nurture our active database. We want to keep them engaged and prevent them from becoming defective by **offering them rewards at timely points** in terms of communication. And we also, as they become more engaged with our brand, want to push them into making higher-value purchases. [...] Now, all this is propped up by other **tactics that we utilize to engage customers at various points of their journey**. For example, abandoned cart, abandoned browse, price drop and back in stock tactics."

Kelly Priest, eCommerce & Digital Marketing Manager

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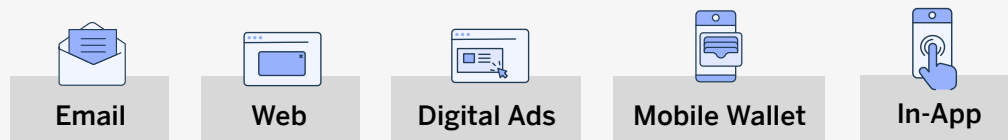
First-Time to Repeat Buyer Campaign Tips

- ✓ Make sure to get the timing right. If you reach out too soon asking for another sale, you'll seem too pushy. But don't wait so long that your customer forgets about your brand.
- ✓ Try A/B testing different creative content to see what resonates. If you're still in the holiday season, align your message with any holiday promotions or post-holiday sales events.
- ✓ If you really want to earn your customer's trust and loyalty, you can follow up with a request for post-purchase feedback, ask customers to complete a survey, or even provide relevant holiday information (store hours, return policies, etc.). This is a nice way to remain engaged with customers without asking them to make another purchase.



8 Join Loyalty

Recommended Channels



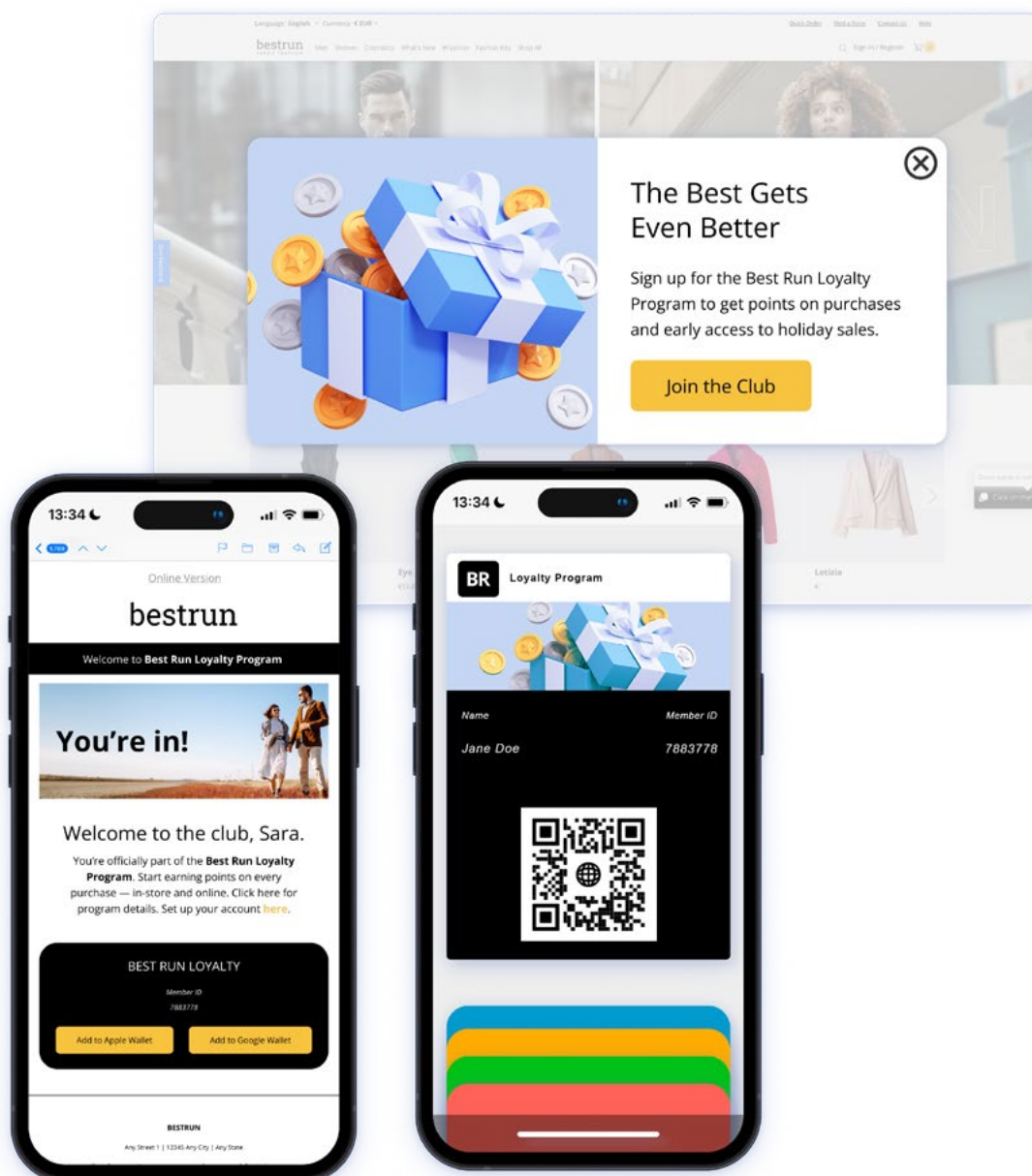
One of the most important tactics you can include in your holiday customer engagement strategy is a campaign to drive sign ups for your loyalty program.


A loyalty program provides customers nice benefits in terms of accruing rewards and getting perks (free shipping, VIP access, etc.). It also provides great benefits to your brand in the form of the zero-party data you gather from loyalty customers, and the fact that loyalty members purchase more items, more often, and at higher values.

Plus, holiday shoppers may be more inclined to sign up for a loyalty program to capitalize on the points they'll earn for their holiday purchases — which makes the holidays a perfect time to push for loyalty signups.

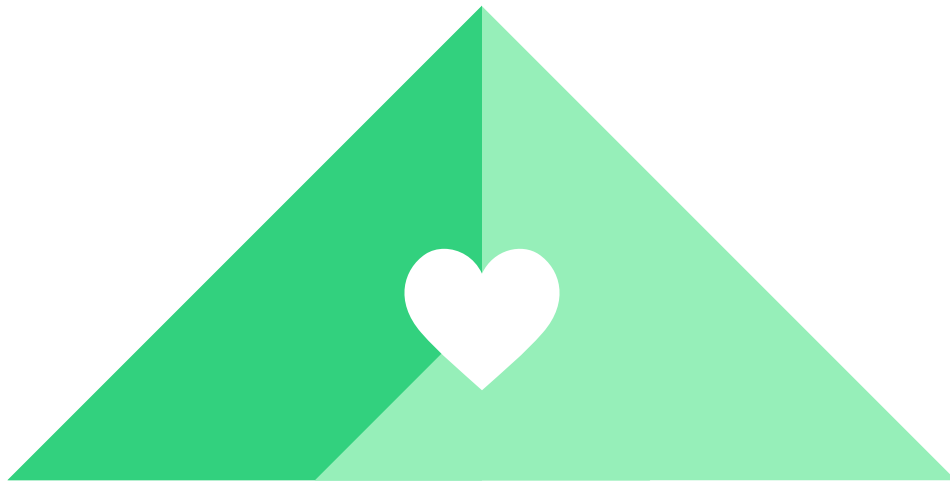
Join Loyalty Campaign Tips

- ✓ This is another campaign where it's important to lead with value — tell your customer what's in it for them when they join the program.
- ✓ When asking loyalty members for their personal info and data, give them assurance about how you'll protect their data and how you'll use it responsibly to provide them a better, more personalized shopping experience.
- ✓ Give customers the option to add a loyalty card to their mobile wallet. This makes it easier for them to rack up points when shopping in-store, and it helps remove the friction of in-store identification.





The Best Tech for the Best Holiday Customer Engagement



Your ability to drive growth and revenue this holiday season will certainly be determined by your customer engagement strategy. It will also be determined by your technology.

Customers may be more eager to spend during the holiday, but it doesn't mean their expectation for highly satisfying personalized experiences on the channels they prefer is diminished — and the technology you have impacts whether you can deliver those channel-agnostic experiences.

As you evaluate your technology in the context of holiday readiness, here are a few must-haves to include:



Integrated Tech Stack

To deliver personalized, relevant, and seamless omnichannel experiences that will really impress your customer and secure their loyalty, you need to have a 360-degree view of the customer. That requires a customer engagement solution that allows you to bring your data together into one single, integrated source. With an integrated tech stack, you'll gain deeper customer insights, a better understanding of the customer lifecycle, and the ability to deliver more personalized recommendations, offers, and other content.



Personalization Engine

A sophisticated personalization engine is required to go beyond the basic personalized content your competitors can do. Seek out an AI-powered personalization engine that enables you to view and understand rich customer profiles, build and modify 1:1 campaigns on the fly, add relevant product recommendations to messages, use predictive segmentation, and review the impact of your efforts. Make sure your tech stack can handle the personalization required to deliver the experiences customers want.



Omnichannel Marketing Automation

Automation saves your marketing team time and effort, even for simple single channel campaigns. It also empowers your team to deliver sophisticated omnichannel journeys at scale — which is a must during the critical holiday season. Ensure you have the automation capabilities to quickly and flexibly launch holiday campaigns, modify them on the fly, scale them across all your channels, and deploy them automatically at the right time for maximum impact.



Strategies and Tactics

Having to build key campaigns individually by hand can take great effort when you need to move fast. You'll want to have a customer engagement solution with built-in strategies and tactics that can be deployed out of the box or easily customized to fit your particular campaign or branding needs.



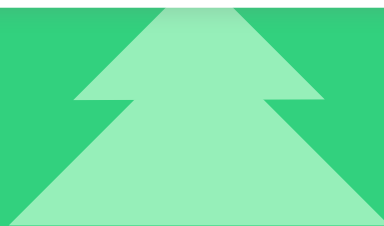
Built-In AI and Analytics

The holiday season gives you a short window of time to maximize growth and revenue. So if your marketing is reactive, rather than proactive, you might be too late in driving the engagement that increases business results. Artificial intelligence allows you to leverage data to better anticipate your customers' needs, always meeting them with the right content at the right place and time. Having analytics built into your platform allows you to see your marketing impact in real time, so you can do more of what's working... or adjust what isn't. To get the best outcomes during the holidays, seek out a customer engagement solution with built-in AI and analytics.

Prepare for the busy shopping season now and shore up your holiday customer engagement strategy. With the tips, tactics, and insights included in this guide, you can lay the foundation for increasing customers, building loyalty, and driving revenue throughout the holiday season and beyond.

Emarsys Has All Your Holiday Customer Engagement Needs Covered

Watch a 3-Minute Demo





"I think for many businesses, you want to do something, but do **you have the right technology in place** to allow you to do it? And for us, our existing martech stack wasn't enabled to **support our vision of driving a seamless omnichannel experience**, and building that single customer view. So we went on a 12-month search for a new partner who would help us, to support our growth, and also be able to deliver on the core use cases that we were trying to deliver for. And we wanted a tool that was **marketer-friendly**, that allowed us to be **agile** in our delivery to market, and that's when we found Emarsys."

Elisse Jones, Group Head of Loyalty



About SAP Emarsys

SAP Emarsys Customer Engagement, empowers digital marketing leaders and business owners with the omnichannel customer engagement solution built to accelerate business outcomes.

By rapidly aligning desired business results with proven omnichannel customer engagement strategies — crowdsourced from leading brands across your industry — our solution enables you to accelerate time to value, deliver superior one-to-one experiences and produce measurable results... fast.

SAP Emarsys is the customer engagement solution of choice for more than 1,500 businesses around the world. Join thousands of leading brands who trust SAP Emarsys to deliver the predictable, profitable outcomes that their businesses demand and the highly personalized omnichannel experiences that their customers deserve. For more information, visit www.emarsys.com



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