



**Yellow!**

# **The SMB's guide to Christmas marketing.**

eBook



# The fundamentals of effective seasonal marketing tactics.



**Well ahead of the holiday season, big retail stores start decorating the aisles with tinsel and playing *Santa's Coming to Town* on repeat.**

And while you might call this overeager, the reality is that the festive season spells a huge opportunity for businesses.

But capitalising on the holidays can be especially challenging for small business owners. How do you ensure your limited marketing dollars are being well spent? How can you stand out from the crowd in a hypercompetitive environment?

In this eBook, we'll walk you through the fundamentals of effective seasonal marketing tactics for SMBs, including the most important areas to focus on, campaign examples for inspiration and useful resources to help you get started.

Let's go!

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# Holiday marketing: The basics.

**When the holiday season rolls around and every business suddenly turns red, green and gold, you might wonder, “Is a marketing campaign really worth the effort?”.**

While it's true that Christmas and New Year's is the most competitive time of year for businesses, it's for good reason. A 2020 survey found that even during the pandemic, Australians were planning to spend a whopping \$17.3 billion over Christmas, a figure that breaks down to \$893 per adult<sup>1</sup>, making it a key time of year for sales.

Reaping the benefits of the holiday sales frenzy comes down to being prepared and ramping up your marketing efforts well in advance, as 56% of Australian consumers begin their holiday shopping in September or earlier<sup>2</sup>.

In fact, a study by point-of-sale app Square found sales begin increasing as early as October (+31%), before rising further in November (+57%) and peaking in December (+73%)<sup>3</sup>.

This year, buyers have been encouraged to start their shopping even earlier due to potential delivery delays. With those statistics in mind, it pays to start planning your holiday marketing strategy as early as possible.



1. <https://www.finder.com.au/australias-christmas-spending-statistics-2020>

2. <https://www.marketingmag.com.au/hubs-c/news-miq-holiday-shopping-trends-2019/>

3. <https://squareup.com/au/en/townsquare/australian-retail-trends-2018>

## The elements of a successful holiday marketing strategy.

### An understanding of your target market.

What will your customers be looking for over the holiday period? Think about how you can cater to their specific needs.

### Positioning.

What is the perception of your brand in the marketplace? Consider what makes your business different to competitors and how you can showcase your unique offering.

### Competitive analysis.

What do your competitors' typical holiday marketing efforts look like? Aim to improve on their approach, or at least to stand apart from it.

### Incentives.

What sort of holiday discounts and deals will your customers be looking for? Think about what you can offer to incentivise sales.

### A timeline.

When will you launch and finish your holiday marketing campaign? Develop a clear plan for all your marketing activities.

### A budget.

Work out how much you can spend on your holiday marketing campaign, broken down by specific activities.

### Goals and metrics.

Define clear objectives for your holiday marketing strategy and how you'll measure success. For example, you might set a goal to improve sales by X% compared to the same period last year.



# Paid advertising.

If you're new to the world of online paid advertising, you might think it's reserved for big businesses with big budgets.

In reality, with the right approach, you can achieve tangible results with a limited spend – so it's a valuable marketing tool for small businesses.

## Types of paid advertising.

### Search engine marketing (SEM).

SEM works based on keywords – you and other businesses like yours bid on keywords through search engines in an effort to make your website more visible in search engine results pages (SERPs). All SEM ads that appear in Google, Bing and other search engines are text ads. They're listed at the top or sides of the SERP.

SEM can be highly profitable, with businesses earning an estimated \$2 for every \$1 spent on Google Ads<sup>4</sup>.

### Social media ads.

Social media advertising allows you to pay to increase visibility of your brand on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. You can use social media ads to either boost the visibility of your



content with your existing followers, or to target groups of people by demographic, interests, behaviours, etc.

See our guide to [social media advertising for small business](#).

### Display ads.

These are ads that appear at the top of web pages as banners and in side columns, or as larger text billboards and smaller boxes. Unlike text-based ads you might see on Google or other search engines, display advertising includes elements such as images, audio and video.

See our guide to [digital display for small business](#).

### Native advertising.

Native advertising refers to paid content on an online publication that's naturally integrated with the site's editorial content. Often, native advertising is used to link back to

an advertiser's website or highlight a specific product or service.

### Remarketing/retargeting.

Remarketing targets people who have already visited your site via ads on other websites. This type of paid advertising can be highly effective as it targets people who are already familiar with your brand.

### Video ads.

YouTube ads are the most popular and well known of video ads, but there are several different formats, types and content options to choose from. Video ads are particularly effective for brands with a product or service that's best demonstrated visually.

Even though video ads are more costly and time-consuming to produce, they can offer fantastic results, with one study showing that average click-through-rates are 7.5 times higher for video ads than display ads<sup>5</sup>.

4: <https://economicimpact.google.com/methodology/>

5: <https://www.smaato.com/press/smaato-liftoff-reveal-most-engaging-in-app-ad-formats/>



## ■ Tips for Paid Marketing.

### ■ 1. Review last year's results.

If you ran paid advertising last year, analyse your previous results before putting together a strategy for this year. Questions to consider include:

- Which channels and paid advertising types worked and which didn't?
- Which creative (such as imagery or copy) was most impactful?
- What audiences were most receptive to your ads?
- Which promotions drove the most purchases?
- Where did you outperform competitors?
- Where did they outperform you? E.g. customer service, promotions, reliability, overall experience.

If this is the first time you have ever tried paid advertising, consider bringing on professional help to guide you in the right direction.

### ■ 2. Conduct tests.

It's a good idea to allocate a percentage of your budget to trying out different approaches before the holiday season begins. This way you'll know what resonates most with your audience and what's most effective at achieving your intended goals. Experiment with:

- Different types of paid advertising, as outlined above
- Targeting different audiences based on your typical customers' demographics, interests and behaviours
- Different types of imagery and copy
- Different call-to-actions (such as 'shop online now', 'explore our range', 'get your Christmas gifts sorted today')
- Different incentives, such as discounts, promotions and special offers.

Testing the waters is useful not just for planning your holiday campaign, but also for identifying successful tactics that you can use in your marketing strategy year-round.

### ■ 3. Choose your channels.

Once you know which types of ads and platforms are most effective for your business, decide on which channels you want to focus on and how much you'll spend on each.

This will be informed by your customers, their behaviours and where they spend their time. For example, a florist may enjoy more engagement on Instagram than on LinkedIn.

## 4. Plan your customer journey.

You might have a lot of eyeballs on your ads, but they'll only be effective if they drive people to do something. Think about what you want people to do when they see your ad – visit your website, buy something, sign up to your mailing list, etc. – and how you can encourage them to take that action.

This might involve designing a specific holiday landing page, creating a sign-up form so customers can receive a promo code via email, or featuring holiday-specific products or services on your homepage.

Think about the customers that you already have – as well as the ones that you would like to attract over the holiday season. Put together a profile of your target customer, including details such as:



Age range



Gender



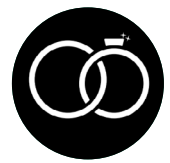
Location



Job



Hobbies /  
Interests



Marital  
status

### Interest targeting.

As you might expect, this involves targeting a specific interest (let's say 'Christmas pudding' for the sake of this example).

### Keyword targeting.

If you target the keyword 'Christmas pudding', your ad provider might serve your ad on the same page as an article about how to make the world's best Christmas pudding.

### Placement targeting.

You could choose to target people by the sites they visit, such as [christmaspudding.com.au](https://www.christmaspudding.com.au), or simply a cooking or recipe website.

### Demographic targeting.

An advertiser can also target by age, gender, marital status, parental status, etc. Are your biggest Christmas pudding purchasers mums aged 25-40? There's your demographic target.

### Audience targeting.

You can also target custom audiences based on who has already visited your website.





Customers are primed for discounts and special offers at any time of year, but especially during holiday periods. To stand out from the pack and drive clicks on your ad, you'll need an engaging offer. Some ideas include:

- A limited-time discount
- A discount promo code with email sign-up
- A 'spend \$X get X% off' deal
- A 2-for-1 offer or package deal
- A freebie with purchase

## ■ 5. Plan for demand.

Ultimately, you want your holiday campaign to not only drive sales, but also grow your year-round customer base. Great customer service is critical to customer loyalty, so it's imperative to have a plan in place for how you'll deal with the uptick in sales over the holiday season.

# SEO.

**You know you want to boost your rankings, generate more website traffic, and, ultimately, increase sales for the holidays.**

Search engine optimisation (SEO) can help you do all of that by increasing the visibility of your website in Google's organic search results, making it easier for new customers to find you online.

As much as 53.3% of all web traffic comes from organic search, making this route a key component of any digital marketing strategy<sup>6</sup>.

However, SEO efforts typically take a couple of months to see solid results, so it's best to start early if you want to reap the biggest benefits during the holiday period.

## ■ Tips for seasonal SEO.

### 1. Get the essentials right first.

Before you start thinking about how SEO can boost your holiday marketing efforts, it's important to understand the fundamentals that are key to successful SEO all year round.

Regularly updated, compelling content is really the secret sauce of SEO. If you can provide your audience with content that's relevant and interesting to them, you'll reap benefits in terms of

increased traffic to your site, links back to your site and higher levels of engagement on your site – all of which are beneficial to your search engine rankings.

In essence, good SEO content:

- Is genuinely informative
- Is relevant to your audience
- Answers a question or solves a problem
- Is engaging
- Is neither too short or too long (aim for 300-600 words per blog).

You should also aim to add content regularly, as Google loves websites that update with fresh content more often (aim for at least once per week).

There are also lots of technical aspects of your website that can impact how highly your web pages rank in search engines, such as your site speed and mobile friendliness. It's a good idea to talk to a professional SEO expert who can help ensure your site is properly optimised.

### 2. Research seasonal trends and keywords.

SEO is all about creating valuable content that relates to topics people are searching for. The same principle applies to SEO for the holiday season, so it's worthwhile doing some research on seasonal trends and keywords to help inform your content strategy.



Here are some useful free SEO research tools:

### Ubersuggest

Ubersuggest is a tool that generates long tail keyword suggestions based on an initial keyword you input.

It aggregates data from Google Suggest, which provides keyword ideas similar and related to your searches on Google.

### Google Trends

Google Trends visualises how search trends change over time. Once you enter a keyword, you will see the relative popularity of that search query over the past 12 months, or over your chosen timeframe.

### AnswerThePublic

AnswerThePublic helps you find out how people are asking questions in search engines. Enter a keyword and it will generate searched-for questions related to that keyword as well as other related queries.

**TIP: Get specific and identify long-tail terms to boost your chance of ranking organically. For example, rather than focusing on 'Christmas activities' or 'Christmas ideas', you might focus on 'Christmas activities in [your suburb]' or 'Christmas ideas for colleagues 2021'.**

## Plan optimised holiday content.

Once you've identified some holiday topics that are relevant to your business, think about the sorts of holiday-focused content you can create to target long-tail search terms.

Content can take the form of blogs, tutorials, eBooks, white papers, videos, infographics and more. Finding out what types of content work best for your business is all about testing and learning as you go along.

Remember that search engines can only read text in HTML, so any purely visual content should be accompanied by a few hundred words or so of text on the page to give it context.

**TIP: Don't delete your seasonal content once January rolls around. Update the existing pieces each year, so you can retain the authority the pages build over time.**

## Holiday SEO best practices.

- Aim to target longer, more specific search terms rather than generic keywords like 'Christmas gifts'
- Make sure all content is original and not duplicated
- Include internal links to

other content on your site – they help with building site authority and improving the user experience

- Include limited external links to relevant pages where appropriate – they help Google understand the context of your content
- Use headings, bullet points, tables and imagery to break up content into easily digestible pieces
- Don't forget to create local SEO content to help attract your local market/s.



# Content marketing.

**When it comes to holiday content marketing, your goal shouldn't be just to sell a product or service, but rather to provide content that's helpful, meaningful and created based on what your audience is looking for.**

Having said that, it's good to tie your holiday content back to your business' offering in some way. Here are some examples of holiday content ideas for different types of businesses:



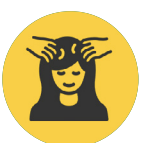
#### **Florist:**

A video guide to types of festive flowers and arrangements.  
Hairdresser: A tutorial on summer haircare or styles.



#### **Hairdresser:**

A tutorial on summer haircare or styles.



#### **Doctor/fitness centre:**

Tips for staying healthy during the silly season.



#### **Plumber/electrician/locksmith:**

How to find an emergency tradie on public holidays.



#### **Mechanic:**

What to check on your car before going on a road trip.



#### **Accountant:**

How to create (and stick to) a gift budget.

## **Content marketing ideas for the silly season.**

### **Create festive branded imagery.**

Your imagery should always represent your brand's personality and values, and adding a touch of festive goodness will show that you're approachable and in the spirit of the season. You can create a subtle but effective Christmas

mood by adding a Santa hat, bauble, or Christmas lights to your logo.

### **Share the Christmas spirit.**

Social media is social by its very definition, so ask your audience questions to get them in the spirit of things. A good place to start is by asking people about their favourite Christmas memory, the best present they've ever received, or what food they're most looking forward to stuffing themselves silly with.

### **Grant a wish.**

A creative way to encourage engagement is to run a Christmas competition offering to make one person's Christmas wish come true. This could be in the form of a free makeover, kitchen renovation, garden overhaul or anything that relates to what your business does.

### **Give back.**

Consumers respond more positively to marketing that relates to charitable activities than other marketing strategies and, with Christmas being the season of giving, why not use the opportunity to show your business' charitable side?

Consider making a donation to a charity and posting about it on social media, or offering to match donations from followers.

## ■ Content marketing ideas.

Looking for some fun and effective marketing ideas this holiday season? Here are some great campaigns to inspire you.



### **Priceline Pharmacy**

Australia's pharmacy Priceline came out with the 'Little Christmas Something' campaign in 2020, and it was wonderful. The message was that gifts don't have to be expensive to be meaningful and, after a tough year for countless Australians, it definitely hit the right note.

#### **Why it works:**

- Timely message for pandemic marketing
- Genuinely helpful for shoppers on a budget
- Highlighted their affordable gift range



## Tesco

In a highly relatable one-minute video ad, Tesco connected to practically everyone in their 2020 Christmas campaign. Created around the idea that there 'Is no naughty list' this year, this ad featured several people sharing what they did in 2020 that should have placed them on the naughty list, such as buying too many loo rolls, or not washing their hands for long enough.

### Why it works:

- Extremely relatable
- Excellent humour and upbeat tone
- Subtly promotes their products





## Teleflora

For Mother's Day in 2018, Teleflora released a series of 60-second videos on YouTube, Facebook and Instagram titled 'Love Makes a Mom', designed to celebrate the unconditional love that unifies all mums. The campaign was part of Teleflora's broader 'Love Out Loud' campaign which was accompanied by a massive wall of flowers in Washington, D.C.

### Why it works:

- Great combination of online-offline marketing
- Subtly ties back to Teleflora's products
- Shares real people's stories



## Aldi

In 2020, when everyone needed a little extra silly in their silly season, ALDI delivered. A video ad featured a number of Santas diving into a pool and performing synchronised swimming, complete with the occasional plate of turkey and prawns.

### Why it works:

- Plays on Australian hot summer traditions
- Humorous and playful
- Subtly showcases ALDI's products



## Bonds

In 2020, Bonds embraced the giving attitude and released a 'Give a little, Help a million' campaign, where they donated one million pairs of Bonds undies to Australians in need. The simple ad featured everyday Australians in their undies sending messages of love and kindness.

### Why it works:

- Highlighted Bonds as a giving brand
- Encourages goodwill
- Featured everyday Australians of all shapes and sizes





## Office Depot

Elf Yourself is a recurring holiday campaign created by US stationery giant Office Depot, which lets users create elves using pictures of themselves. Since 2006, users have created over one billion elves using the site and app.

Users can also share their creations on social media, along with the hashtag #ElfYourself.

### Why it works:

- Fun and engaging
- Encourages user participation
- An ideal format for social media sharing

## Dymocks

For the 2018 holiday season, Dymocks ran a successful email marketing campaign with a limited time offer for subscribers. In a smart move, the promotion ran during the last week of November – earlier than many other Christmas offers – enabling the brand to get ahead of competitors.

### Why it works:

- Great use of rewards/discount offer
- Clear and simple layout
- WWStrategically timed

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Merry Christmas from the well-read people of Dymocks

*Be inspired...*  
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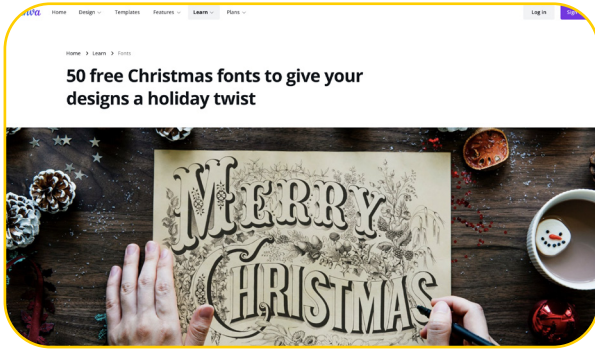
Change kids' lives one book at a time.

[Help us, help kids.](#) **DYMOCKS** CHILDRENS CHARITIES [FIND OUT MORE](#)

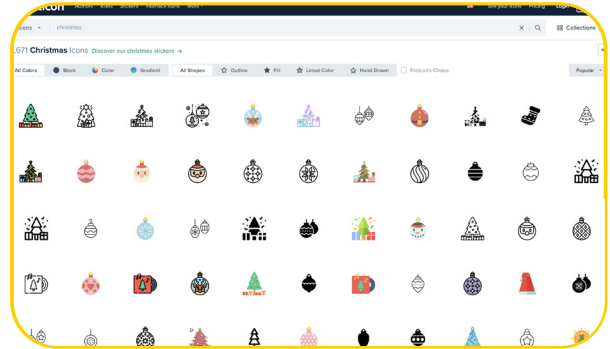
Account Number: 3085051107079266  
 Home Store: Dymocks Brisbane

[f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [B](#)

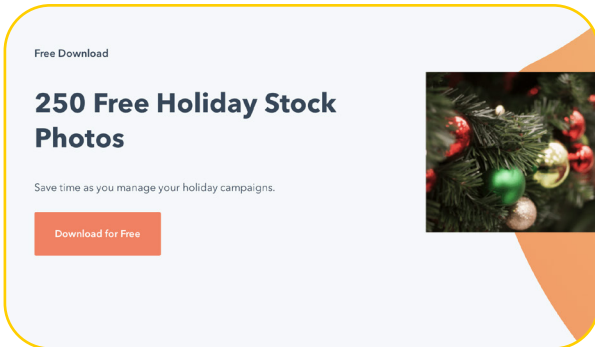
# Useful holiday marketing resources.



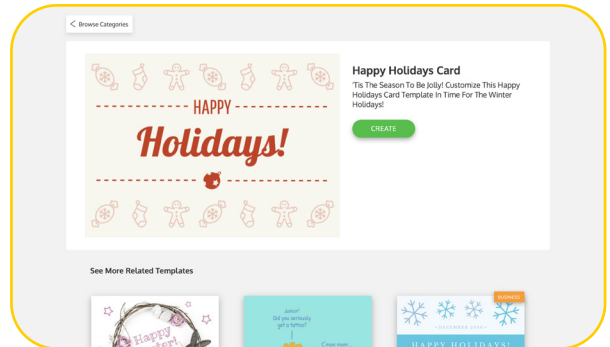
50 free Christmas fonts.



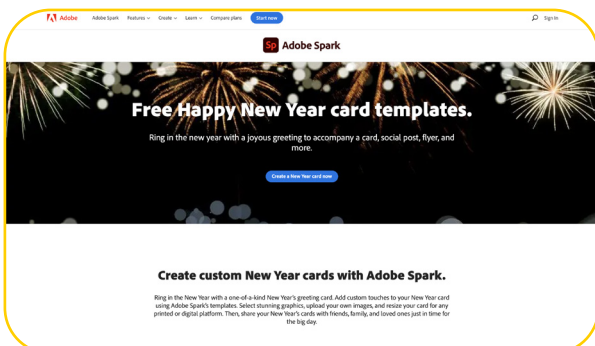
Free Christmas icons.



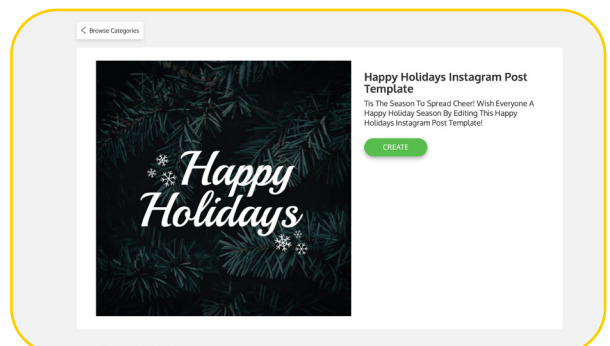
250 free holiday stock photos.



Happy holidays card template.



Happy New Year card template.



Happy holidays Instagram post template.

# Your holiday marketing timeline.

## ■ 10-12 weeks to going live.

Audit previous holiday marketing efforts and identify key lessons

Round up the team to come up with creative campaign ideas

Get started with SEO research and optimisation, as it can take a couple of months to see organic results.

## ■ 8 weeks to going live.

Refine your campaign idea

Set objectives – what do you want to achieve? More sales? New customers?

## ■ 6 weeks to going live.

Work out budget and resource requirements

Nail down your campaign messaging

Set up and test mock campaigns – social ads, AdWords campaigns, display ads etc.

## ■ 4 weeks to going live.

Confirm your marketing plan schedule

Confirm your paid advertising channels based on your tests

Get started on the assets – images, videos, competition forms, etc.

## ■ 2 weeks to going live.

Do a final review of all marketing material, cross-referencing against your schedule.

## ■ Going live.

Engage with your audience and answer questions

Monitor performance, be agile, and adjust your strategy if need be

Make a reminder in your calendar for next year for when to start step one of your Christmas marketing planning based on how long it took this year.

## And before you go...

If you need guidance setting up a holiday marketing campaign, Yellow Pages is here to help. From an online listing to SEM, to social ads and more, we have everything you need to get ahead during the holiday season.

Find out more [here](#) or give us a call on 1800 670 722.