

COLUMNS

6 tips to help you succeed this holiday season

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The 2019 holiday season is going to look very different this year. For one thing, it is shorter.

The late Thanksgiving holiday can put retailers at disadvantage. But that is not all. Consumers are continuing to evolve in how they shop and discover products. Their expectations have changed and it is up to brands to deliver this holiday.

Below are best practices, do's and don'ts for brands to be able to woo and hook their target consumers this holiday season and beyond:

Analyze and optimize mid-campaign

If you are waiting till the New Year to run reports on 2019 holiday campaign performance, you are too late and are probably leaving a lot of money on the table.

It is crucial to quickly analyze real-time results and consumer behavior throughout the campaign, to be able to optimize what works best for each audience, and understand when it works, where it works and why it works.

Your results might surprise you you might find that one channel performs exceptionally well with one type of creative execution, while that execution does not do well somewhere else.

Remember, what works on programmatic might not be right for Instagram, what works for specific consumers might not work for others, and so on.

Be everywhere. Be coordinated

Be everywhere your consumers are. The consumer journey is more complex than ever before. This means that they travel around the Web on the phones, via their desktop computers, through their smart televisions and back again.

While omnichannel marketing is not necessarily new, brands fail when they do not use their data in a coordinated fashion throughout all channels.

Make sure your data strategy is weaved through your channel strategy, and you have the right technology partners to support your omnichannel efforts.

Do not rely on a second impression it takes only one bad experience to lose a consumer

Be relevant through personalization. Consumers are expected to digest lots of data and visual information during the holidays, so when planning the communication of your brand, it is crucial to personalize the campaigns' elements and use sequential messaging.

Remember, if you do not do it right, another brand will.

Do not forget your brand

Sure, your job is not to just raise brand awareness during the holidays, it is to sell products. But "brandless" product messaging is not doing you any favors in either.

Keep your brand integrity, and incorporate brand messaging/design throughout product campaigns. This will help your brand stand the test of time and will foster loyalty, while also encouraging sales during the holiday season.

Instagram has impact

Instagram Stories has the opportunity to take a straight brand awareness strategy to a direct response one.

Last year, brands merely experimented with Stories and vertical videos, placing a lot of the power into the hands of influencers.

This year however, Instagram is a leading platform for a full-funnel experience, from discovery to purchase.

Brands should use all available tools, ad formats and features to maximize and personalize the consumer experience.

With Instagram, brands can take over the screen, develop unique creative executions and leverage multiple data signals to build stronger connections and drive sales.

Make shopping easy and frustration-free

According to a [recent consumer survey](#) by Clinch, nearly half (47 percent) of consumers responded that their top frustration with ads occurred when, after clicking on product in the ad, the link took them to the homepage and not the specific product. Can you blame them?

It is important to ensure that ads have deep-links that send to the product users click on. If they are going to click, make it easy and seamless for them to find what they want.

Frequency capping and sequential messaging are also a must: 62 percent of consumers cited that seeing the same ads over and over again was a "top frustration." This goes back to the use of data, across channels. Make sure all agencies and tech partners are being consistent with their use of data.

Integrate and consider inventory in your dynamic ads. Twenty-eight percent of consumers respond that clicking on an ad only to realize the product is no longer available is their top frustration.

JUST LIKE IN years' past, new consumer trends will emerge this holiday season.

It is important to know your brand, use your data and optimize in real-time.

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