Wunderkind

Consumer Psychology Unleashed

Peak Season Tactics That Work All Year

Unlocking the Power of Holiday Insights for Year-Round Success

The holiday season has always been the pinnacle of consumer engagement, with Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and the surrounding weeks setting the stage for intense competition among brands and retailers. Yet, the 2024 holiday shopping season was more than a moment in time—it was a window into the evolving psyche of modern shoppers. Through this report, we aim to provide senior marketers with more than just raw data; we reveal the "why" behind consumer behaviors, offering actionable insights that can guide your strategies not only during the holidays but throughout the entire year.

This year's findings highlight critical trends that every brand should take to heart. For example, free shipping remains a powerful motivator for online purchases, cited as the most influential non-discount incentive by 61% of respondents. Similarly, a majority of consumers begin their holiday shopping early, with a significant portion taking action as early as September. However, other behaviors—like abandoning online carts to wait for promotional emails or delaying purchases until shipping deadlines—emphasize how strategic use of email and text messaging can play a pivotal role in influencing purchase decisions.

Marketers reading this report will also notice the profound impact of generational and gender-based preferences. For instance, Gen Z leans toward behavioral strategies like cart abandonment and eagerly responds to personalized digital offers, while Boomers show a strong preference for free shipping and straightforward purchase journeys. Meanwhile, women are more likely to engage with loyalty points and personalized rewards, while men gravitate toward larger discounts and banner ads. Understanding these nuances enables marketers to tailor campaigns for maximum impact.

What makes this data even more relevant is its applicability beyond the holiday season. While Black Friday and Cyber Monday remain focal points for driving sales, the strategies derived from consumer behavior during this period can—and should—be applied to other key shopping moments throughout the year. Whether it's Valentine's Day, back-to-school season, or even brand-specific anniversaries, these insights will empower you to craft campaigns that resonate across every channel and buying cycle.

At its core, this report serves as a call to action for marketers: leverage your understanding of consumers wisely. The most successful brands in 2025 will be those that harness behavioral data to create personalized offers, foster meaningful engagement with their audiences, and build year-round opt-in strategies for email and text marketing. As you dive into the findings, think of them not just as a reflection of past behaviors but as a toolkit for shaping future success.

Welcome to the next step in data-driven marketing—where every insight becomes an opportunity, and every campaign a chance to connect.

Shopping Starts Early

The timing of holiday shopping reveals much about consumer planning and prioritization. In 2024, a significant portion of consumers began their shopping early to secure deals and avoid the rush. Notably, 22% of shoppers started in September or earlier, with another 14% beginning in October to take advantage of early sales. Meanwhile, 19% of consumers initiated their purchases in early November, and 22% strategically timed their shopping for Black Friday or Cyber Monday. Conversely, 17% waited until early December, and a smaller 6% identified as last-minute shoppers, purchasing just days before the holidays.

For marketers, this diverse shopping timeline necessitates a prolonged and dynamic promotional calendar, with tailored campaigns targeting early planners and last-minute buyers alike. Highlights by demographic reveal:

Age Trends:

- Gen X shoppers (ages 44 to 59) were most likely to start early, with 64% beginning their shopping in the first half of November or earlier.
- Gen Z (ages 18 to 27) followed closely, with 61% starting in the same timeframe.
- Millennials (ages 28 to 43) had 50% of shoppers starting early.
- Boomers (ages 55+) lagged, with only 45% starting in the same timeframe. Boomers also showed the highest tendency to procrastinate, with 24% waiting until early December, compared to just 14% of Gen Z and Gen X shoppers.

Gender Differences:

- Males accounted for a larger share of early shoppers, with 26% starting in September or earlier, compared to 19% of women.
- Women showed a higher propensity to delay, with 8% making purchases at the last minute, compared to only 4% of males.

THIS YEAR, WHEN DID OR WILL YOU BEGIN YOUR HOLIDAY GIFT SHOPPING?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
I started shopping in September or earlier to get ahead	22%	21%	23%	25%	19%	26%	22%
I started in October to take advantage of early deals	9%	20%	14%	12%	16%	12%	14%
I started in early November	14%	23%	13%	24%	22%	14%	19%
I started during BFCM week November	24%	18%	27%	18%	20%	23%	22%
I waited until early December to do most of my shopping	24%	14%	18%	14%	14%	21%	17%
I will shop at the last minute, just a few days before the holiday	7%	5%	6%	7%	8%	4%	6%

Purposely Waiting for Deals

Waiting for the best deals is a hallmark of holiday shopping behavior. In 2024, 67% of consumers reported "Yes," indicating they deliberately waited to make holiday purchases during the Black Friday and Cyber Monday (BFCM) sales period. According to the survey summary, this intentional delay was particularly pronounced among younger shoppers, with Gen Z representing the largest share of those waiting at 78%. Additionally, men (70%) were slightly more likely than women (64%) to delay purchases until these key sales events.

To capture the attention of these intentional shoppers, marketers should design time-sensitive campaigns that highlight exclusive BFCM deals and create urgency around limited-time offers.

Age Trends:

Generational preferences for waiting to purchase revealed distinct differences in behavior:

- Among Gen Z, 78% delayed their purchases to capitalize on BFCM deals.
- Millennials closely followed at 74%.
- Boomers were significantly less likely to wait, with only 48% delaying purchases.

These insights underscore the value of tailoring personalized messaging and pre-sale notifications via email or SMS to each generational group, ensuring maximum relevance and engagement.

Gender Differences:

Men's slightly stronger tendency to wait for major deals (70%) compared to women (64%) presents an opportunity for campaigns that emphasize substantial savings and exclusive access tailored to this demographic.

DID YOU PURPOSEFULLY WAIT TO PURCHASE ANY HOLIDAY GIFTS THIS YEAR UNTIL THE BFCM SALES PERIOD?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Yes	48%	65%	74%	78%	64%	70%	67%
No	52%	35%	26%	22%	36%	30%	33%

Gift Research and Browsing Habits

The level of preparation among holiday shoppers varied widely, revealing differing approaches to gift research. In 2024, 36% of shoppers reported conducting "a good amount" of research, while 27% noted putting in "some" effort. Meanwhile, 10% admitted to conducting no research at all, highlighting a split between deliberate planners and spontaneous buyers. These trends underscore the importance of engaging consumers early in their research journey to influence purchasing decisions.

To effectively reach both highly engaged researchers and casual browsers, marketers should focus on providing accessible, informative content and leveraging tools like product comparison guides or early deal teasers.

Age Trends:

Gen Z was the most engaged, with 57% conducting either “a good amount” or “extensive research,” compared to just 35% of older shoppers (ages 55+) reporting the same level of effort. The younger demographic values detailed product information and online reviews, emphasizing the need for robust digital content strategies.

Gender Differences:

Men were more likely to conduct "a good amount" of research (41%) compared to women (31%), who were slightly more inclined toward minimal effort (12%).

HOW MUCH WEBSITE BROWSING AND ONLINE RESEARCH FOR HOLIDAY GIFTS DID YOU DO BEFORE THE BFCM WEEK OF SALES?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	**GEN X**	**MILLENNIAL**	**GEN Z**	**FEMALE**	**MALE**	**TOTAL**
No research at all	13%	10%	11%	5%	12%	7%	10%
Very little research	20%	13%	16%	19%	17%	16%	17%
Some research	32%	32%	27%	18%	29%	25%	27%
A good amount of research	29%	33%	36%	45%	31%	41%	36%
An extensive amount of research	6%	11%	11%	12%	10%	10%	10%

Online vs. In-Store Shopping

The survey revealed patterns in how consumers planned their online versus in-store holiday purchases in 2024. Among respondents overall, 26% anticipated completing 75% to 100% of their holiday shopping online, while another 33% estimated to conduct 50% to 75% online. Meanwhile, 28% predicted that 25% to 50% of their shopping would be online, with the remainder in-store, and 13% reported doing the majority of their shopping in physical stores (up to 25% online).

These insights highlight the dominance of eCommerce but also emphasize the enduring relevance of physical stores for certain shopper segments. This omnichannel approach reflects an evolving retail landscape where consumers value the convenience of online shopping while leveraging in-store experiences for specific purchases.

To cater to this mix of behaviors, marketers should prioritize hybrid strategies that integrate seamless online experiences with engaging in-store activations.

Age Trends:
Gen Z shoppers were the most likely to do 50% or more of their holiday shopping online, with 44% reporting this behavior, while only 44% of Boomers claimed to complete up to half of their shopping online.

Gender Differences:
Women showed a stronger preference for online shopping, with 33% completing 50% to 75% online. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to favor in-store shopping, with 16% completing only up to 25% of their shopping online.

WHEN CONSIDERING TOTAL HOLIDAY PURCHASES YOU WILL MAKE THIS YEAR, WHICH PERCENTAGE DO YOU BELIEVE WILL BE ONLINE VERSUS IN A PHYSICAL STORE?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
75% to 100% online	29%	21%	27%	27%	29%	23%	26%
50% to 75% online	27%	39%	30%	36%	33%	33%	33%
25% to 50% online	25%	23%	31%	34%	28%	29%	28%
Up to 25% online	19%	18%	13%	3%	11%	16%	13%

Total Holiday Budget Planning

Holiday budgets reflected a spectrum of spending habits, with 25% of respondents planning to spend between $250 and $500 during the 2024 holiday season. Another 21% indicated budgets between $100 and $250, while 21% also anticipated spending $500 to $1,000. Notably, 17% projected higher budgets of $1,000 to $3,000, and only 8% planned to spend under $100. These findings illustrate the varied financial commitments households make during the holidays, driven by factors such as income, family size, and gifting traditions.

For marketers, these insights highlight opportunities to tailor promotional strategies for a diverse range of budgets. By emphasizing value for moderate spenders and exclusive offers for higher-budget shoppers, brands can better align with consumer expectations and maximize engagement.

Age Trends:
Nearly every age group allocated 25% of their budget within the $250 to $500 range. Millennials stood out with higher budgets, as 9% reported planning to spend between $3,000 and $5,000 in total.

Gender Differences:
Men and women showed similar tendencies for budgets over $1,000, with 25% and 24%, respectively, reporting plans to spend at those levels.

HOW MUCH WILL YOUR ENTIRE HOUSEHOLD PLAN TO SPEND IN TOTAL ON GIFTS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Under $100	9%	5%	11%	8%	10%	7%	8%
$100 to $250	20%	25%	13%	26%	21%	21%	21%
$250 to $500	26%	26%	24%	25%	26%	24%	25%
$500 to $1,000	25%	23%	22%	17%	19%	24%	21%
$1,000 to $3,000	16%	16%	21%	14%	16%	18%	17%
$3,000 to $5,000	2%	2%	9%	8%	6%	5%	6%
More than $5,000	0%	3%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%

BFCM Shopping Days and Behaviors

The timing of online purchases during the holiday season showcases consumer engagement with key promotional events. In 2024, Black Friday remained the most popular shopping day, with 58% of respondents reporting a purchase on this day. Cyber Monday followed closely, attracting 51% of shoppers. Other significant days included the Tuesday and Wednesday before Thanksgiving (24% and 22%, respectively), as well as Small Business Saturday (20%). Notably, 15% of respondents indicated that they made no purchases on any of these designated days, highlighting a segment of consumers who avoid the rush of major shopping events.

For marketers, these trends underscore the importance of aligning promotions with high-traffic shopping days while also engaging those who prefer to shop outside of peak periods. Offering exclusive deals across multiple days can help capture a broader audience and drive sustained sales momentum. Adding deadlines to key shopping period promotions also drives urgency and conversion. Consider these tactics all year round when thinking of your promotional periods and strong buying seasons.

Age Trends:

- 65% of Gen X consumers made a purchase on Black Friday, the highest of any age group, while Boomers represented the smallest share at 49%.
- Cyber Monday drew participation across all age groups, with Gen Z having the smallest share (48%) and Boomers the highest (53%).

Gender Differences:

- Men were more likely to shop on Black Friday (61%) compared to women (56%).
- Women had the highest percentage of respondents claiming they made no purchases during the week of BFCM (19%), while only 10% of men made the same claim.

SELECT ALL DAYS THAT YOU MADE AN ONLINE HOLIDAY GIFT PURCHASE.

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Tuesday before Thanksgiving	19%	20%	34%	22%	24%	23%	24%
Wednesday before Thanksgiving	10%	21%	28%	26%	21%	22%	22%
Thanksgiving	9%	16%	21%	27%	17%	20%	19%
Black Friday	49%	65%	55%	62%	56%	61%	58%
Small Business Saturday	18%	15%	24%	25%	17%	23%	20%
Super Sunday	9%	10%	18%	18%	14%	14%	14%
Cyber Monday	53%	52%	51%	48%	52%	49%	51%
Giving Tuesday	14%	6%	13%	12%	11%	11%	11%
None of these days	29%	15%	11%	7%	19%	10%	15%

When Were the Best Deals?

Black Friday continued to dominate perceptions of value in 2024, with 39% of respondents identifying it as the day offering the best prices or deals. Cyber Monday followed as the second-most valued day, favored by 28% of respondents. Other days, such as Small Business Saturday and the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, received minimal recognition, with only 7% and 4% of respondents selecting them, respectively. Notably, 2% of shoppers indicated that none of the days stood out in terms of compelling deals.

For marketers, this data underscores the critical importance of Black Friday and Cyber Monday in promotional strategies. These days are seen as peak opportunities for both online and in-store promotions, requiring carefully timed, high-impact campaigns to maximize engagement. Thinking about launching your promotions as early as Halloween for end-of-year holidays can help keep your brand stay top-of-mind when consumers are ready to purchase. Remember to use urgency and deadlines in promotions year-round to drive maximum conversions when competing brands are vying for consumer attention.

Age Trends:

- Gen X had the highest response, with 46% claiming the deals were best on Black Friday.
- Gen Z showed the lowest excitement for Cyber Monday deals, with only 19% feeling this day offered the best promotions.

Gender Differences:

- Both men and women viewed the offers on Black Friday and Cyber Monday similarly.

WHICH DAY DID YOU FEEL HAD THE BEST PRICES OR OFFERS FROM BRANDS OR RETAILERS?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Tuesday before Thanksgiving	9%	10%	14%	13%	12%	12%	12%
Wednesday before Thanksgiving	5%	8%	8%	9%	6%	10%	8%
Thanksgiving	2%	5%	1%	6%	3%	4%	4%
Black Friday	36%	46%	33%	38%	38%	39%	39%
Small Business Saturday	7%	2%	7%	4%	5%	5%	5%
Super Sunday	0%	0%	3%	4%	2%	2%	2%
Cyber Monday	36%	24%	28%	19%	27%	25%	26%
Giving Tuesday	0%	0%	3%	4%	4%	1%	2%
None of these days	5%	4%	2%	1%	4%	2%	3%

Holiday Purchase Volumes

The number of items purchased by consumers during the holiday season varied significantly in 2024, reflecting diverse gifting strategies and budget allocations. The largest segment of respondents (33%) reported buying 5 to 10 items across BFCM shopping days. Another 30% purchased between 3 and 5 items, while 18% bought between 10 and 20. A smaller group (7%) exceeded 20 items, showcasing high-volume shoppers, whereas 12% purchased only 1 to 3 items.

For marketers, understanding these purchase volumes can inform tailored product bundles, promotions, and messaging to different shopper profiles. High-volume shoppers might respond well to bulk discounts and free shipping incentives, while lower-volume shoppers might prioritize quality over quantity. Additionally, leveraging email and text messaging to offer accessories or complementary products is a surefire way to generate more revenue and encourage repeat purchases.

Age Trends:

- Gen Z (24%) and Millennials (19%) showed a tendency for higher purchase volumes, buying 10 or more items across BFCM.
- In contrast, only 11% of Boomers purchased this amount.

Gender Differences:

- Both men and women displayed similar patterns when buying five or more items across BFCM.
- However, women edged out men (8% vs. 5%) when it came to buying 20 or more items during that week.

ROUGHLY HOW MANY TOTAL ITEMS DID YOU PURCHASE ACROSS THOSE DAYS?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
None	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
1 to 3	13%	13%	10%	12%	10%	14%	12%
3 to 5	30%	27%	29%	34%	32%	28%	30%
5 to 10	43%	33%	33%	25%	31%	34%	33%
10 to 20	11%	17%	19%	24%	18%	18%	18%
More than 20	3%	8%	8%	6%	8%	5%	7%

Shopping for Others

The holiday season brings a mix of altruistic and self-focused shopping behavior. In 2024, the majority of purchases were made for immediate family members (66%), followed by other relatives (48%), and friends or coworkers (28%). Notably, 41% of shoppers also treated themselves, showcasing a balance between gifting for others and indulging in personal purchases.

To effectively appeal to this dynamic, marketers should craft campaigns that address both the practical needs of gift-givers and the aspirational desires of self-shoppers. Implementing on-site tools to determine whether a purchase is for the site visitor or as a gift can help marketers differentiate transactional and behavioral data. This distinction enables them to separate self-purchased items from gifting information, both of which can inform future offers and personalized messaging.

Age Trends:

- Boomers purchased the least for themselves during BFCM, with only 32% reporting self-purchases, but had the highest rate of purchasing for other family members (66%).
- Roughly 20% of all age groups reported buying gifts for a pet.

Gender Differences:

- Both male and female consumers exhibited similar behavior across all potential gifting recipients.

WHO DID YOU MAKE PURCHASES FOR ON ANY ONE OF THOSE DAYS?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Myself	32%	43%	44%	43%	41%	42%	41%
Immediate family (parent or sibling)	53%	62%	76%	69%	68%	65%	66%
Other family member	66%	54%	42%	38%	49%	48%	48%
Friends or coworkers	21%	29%	29%	31%	28%	29%	28%
Pets	21%	27%	26%	19%	25%	22%	23%

Sources of Online Holiday Purchases

In today's competitive holiday shopping landscape, brands leverage multiple touchpoints to connect with consumers and drive online purchases. Survey results highlighted the influence of different channels on consumer behavior during key BFCM shopping days, showcasing the effectiveness of tailored outreach strategies. Email (24%) and text messaging (18%) emerged as critical drivers of online purchases, while banner or display ads accounted for 21%. Less influential were physical QR codes (9%) and direct mailers (17%), with 39% of respondents indicating that none of these methods played a role in their decision-making.

Marketers should focus on refining their email and text campaigns with personalized, time-sensitive deals. Additionally, visually engaging banner ads can be effective for targeting younger demographics.

Age Trends:

- Gen Z showed the highest responsiveness to banner or display ads (36%), while Boomers preferred email communications (27%).
- Millennials and Gen X displayed notable engagement with text messaging (25% and 16%, respectively).

Gender Differences:

- Men were more influenced by banner ads (29%) than women (13%), whereas women demonstrated a stronger preference for direct mailers (21% vs. 10%).

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DID YOU MAKE AN ONLINE PURCHASE FROM DURING THOSE DAYS?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
An email	23%	18%	23%	31%	22%	26%	24%
A text message	11%	16%	18%	25%	16%	20%	18%
A banner or display ad	2%	16%	24%	36%	13%	29%	21%
A physical QR code	0%	7%	11%	15%	9%	9%	9%
Direct mailer	18%	10%	16%	23%	12%	21%	17%
None of these	57%	49%	40%	16%	43%	34%	39%

Perception of Thanksgiving Week Deals

As brands increasingly compete to attract holiday shoppers, perceptions of deal quality can significantly impact consumer loyalty and shopping behavior. According to the survey, 65% of respondents felt the deals in 2024 were better compared to 2023, reflecting a positive consumer sentiment toward this year's holiday promotions. However, 35% believed last year's deals were superior, indicating room for improvement in capturing all segments of the audience.

Marketers can capitalize on this positive perception by showcasing customer testimonials and highlighting competitive pricing through email and text messaging. Reinforcing the "value" message can further enhance consumer trust and satisfaction.

Age Trends:

- Gen Z and Boomers were equally optimistic about this year's deals, with 68% of each group expressing a preference for 2024.
- Millennials and Gen X showed slightly lower enthusiasm, at 64% and 62%, respectively.

Gender Differences:

- Men were slightly more positive, with 66% believing the 2024 deals were better, compared to 64% of women.

OVERALL, DO YOU FEEL THE DEALS AROUND THANKSGIVING WEEK WERE BETTER THIS YEAR OR LAST YEAR?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Better this year, 2024	68%	62%	64%	68%	64%	66%	65%
Better last year, 2023	32%	38%	36%	32%	36%	34%	35%

Devices for the Largest Holiday Purchases

Consumers display varying preferences when choosing devices for their largest online holiday purchases, highlighting both generational and gender-based differences. According to the data, mobile phones were the most common choice, used by 43% of respondents. Laptops followed at 29%, with desktop computers and tablets/iPads tied at 14%. These figures indicate the continuing importance of mobile devices while laptops maintain a significant share for larger purchases.

Marketers should optimize their strategies for both mobile and laptop experiences. Mobile campaigns should focus on intuitive navigation and seamless checkout processes, while desktop and laptop interfaces should emphasize security features and detailed product information to encourage high-value purchases.

Age Trends:

- Gen Z led in mobile phone usage for large purchases (52%), a 10% increase over any other age group.
- Millennials favored laptops (36%).
- Boomers relied more heavily on desktop computers (24%) compared to younger generations.

Gender Differences:

- Women were more likely to use mobile phones (45%) compared to men (40%).
- Men, however, showed a preference for laptops (31%) and desktops (15%), slightly exceeding women's usage rates (28% and 13%, respectively).

ON WHICH DEVICE DID OR WILL YOU MAKE YOUR LARGEST ONLINE HOLIDAY PURCHASE?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Mobile Phone	33%	42%	42%	52%	45%	40%	43%
Tablet / iPad	16%	15%	14%	10%	13%	14%	14%
Laptop computer	27%	28%	36%	26%	28%	31%	29%
Desktop computer	24%	15%	8%	12%	3%	15%	14%

Most Effective Channels for Persuasion

When it comes to persuading consumers to make online purchases, email emerged as the most effective channel, chosen by 24% of respondents. Banner or display ads followed at 19%, while direct mailers and text messages tied at 9%. Notably, 32% of respondents indicated that none of the listed methods were the most influential channel, highlighting the challenge of capturing consumer attention through all available marketing channels.

Marketers should focus on creating highly personalized and engaging email campaigns while leveraging targeted banner ads to capture consumer interest. Experimenting with new channels and re-engaging inactive audiences could also help determine which channels are most effective for your audience.

Age Trends:

- Gen X and Boomers were most influenced by email (28% and 27%, respectively).
- Gen Z leaned more toward banner or display ads (25%) and text messages (18%).
- Millennials displayed balanced engagement across channels, with 24% favoring email and 21% influenced by banner ads.

Gender Differences:

- Men were more influenced by email (27%) compared to women (22%).
- Women showed slightly higher engagement with banner ads (20%) compared to men (17%).

WHICH WAS OR WILL BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE IN PERSUADING YOU TO MAKE AN ONLINE PURCHASE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
An email	27%	28%	24%	19%	22%	27%	24%
A text message	4%	7%	8%	18%	5%	14%	9%
A banner or display ad	11%	17%	21%	25%	17%	20%	19%
A physical QR code	5%	4%	7%	9%	8%	5%	6%
Direct mailer	10%	8%	8%	10%	8%	10%	9%
None of these	43%	36%	33%	19%	40%	24%	32%

Opting into Holiday Marketing Communications

This question highlights consumer behavior around opting into brand communications to access holiday deals. Overall, 28% of respondents did not opt into any brand marketing, while a comparable 27% subscribed to 1 to 3 brands, indicating the opportunity for retailers to capture attention early in the season. Notably, younger generations were significantly more engaged, with Gen Z and Millennials opting into 3 to 5 brands at 30% and 24%, respectively, compared to only 11% of Boomers. However, 33% signed up for at least 1 to 3 brands. On the higher end, 8% of all respondents subscribed to over 10 or more brands with Millennials leading with 11%, showcasing a small yet highly engaged segment.

Brands should focus on building their email and text marketing lists year-round to maximize reach during the holiday season. Incorporate timely, personalized incentives to encourage opt-ins, particularly from younger consumers. Utilize value-driven messaging (e.g., exclusive deals or early access offers) to appeal to these groups. For younger consumers, emphasize convenience and personalization through email and text channels.

Age Trends:

- Gen Z (30%) and Gen X (25%) were the most likely to opt into 3 to 5 brands.
- 45% of Boomers did not opt into any brand communications, showing a strong age divide in engagement with marketing efforts.

Gender Differences:

- Men were slightly more likely than women to opt into 1 to 3 brands (29% vs. 25%), while 33% of women opted into no brands compared to 23% of men.
- This highlights a need for tailored strategies to better capture female audiences.

HOW MANY BRANDS DID YOU OPT INTO FOR EMAIL OR TEXT MARKETING IN ADVANCE OF THE HOLIDAYS TO GET DEALS AND OFFERS?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
None	45%	26%	27%	18%	33%	23%	28%
1 to 3	33%	28%	24%	23%	25%	29%	27%
3 to 5	11%	25%	24%	30%	22%	25%	23%
5 to 10	9%	15%	15%	18%	12%	16%	14%
10 to 20	1%	2%	7%	4%	3%	4%	4%
More than 20	0%	5%	4%	7%	5%	3%	4%

Consumer Perceptions of Holiday Discounts

Discounting remains a powerful tool for driving conversions during the competitive holiday season. For many consumers, a 25% discount was identified as the threshold for a "good deal" by the largest group of respondents (17%), followed closely by 20% (14%) and 50% or more (17%). Notably, deeper discounts of 30% or higher resonate with smaller portions of shoppers, with only 6% of respondents marking 30% as a good deal and 8% for 35%. Brands should note that while substantial discounts are appreciated, they are not always necessary to create perceived value—careful calibration can maximize returns.

Leverage strategic discounting during the holiday season to stand out amid the clutter of promotional messaging. Rather than focusing solely on deep discounts, brands can use modest discounts (e.g., 20%-25%) to increase perceived value while maximizing basket size and overall profitability.

Age Trends:

- Preferences for deeper discounts (50% or more) were highest among Gen Z (19%) and Millennials (19%),while Boomers valued moderate discounts of 25% most (19%).
- Gen X showed an even split between favoring 20% and 50% discounts (both at 12%).

Gender Differences:

- Men showed a stronger preference for 25% discounts (20%) compared to women (13%).
- Women were more likely to perceive 50% or more as a "good deal" (22%) compared to men (11%).

BRANDS DISCOUNT HEAVILY FOR HOLIDAYS. AT WHICH PERCENTAGE OF DISCOUNT DO YOU GENERALLY FEEL YOU ARE GETTING A 'GOOD DEAL'?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
5%	3%	3%	5%	4%	3%	4%	4%
10%	3%	3%	8%	4%	4%	6%	5%
15%	8%	8%	9%	14%	10%	9%	10%
20%	15%	12%	16%	14%	11%	17%	14%
25%	19%	16%	16%	16%	13%	20%	17%
30%	9%	6%	8%	1%	6%	6%	6%
35%	10%	12%	3%	7%	8%	8%	8%
40%	19%	15%	13%	15%	17%	13%	15%
45%	4%	4%	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%
50% or more	11%	19%	17%	19%	22%	11%	17%

Most Influential Non-Discount Offers

While discounts remain critical during the holiday season, consumers also value additional offers that enhance their online shopping experience. Free shipping emerged as the most persuasive incentive for 61% of respondents, far outpacing other offers such as loyalty points (14%) or free gifts of low value (13%). Free returns or exchanges (8%) and free alterations or adjustments (4%) were less influential overall. This underscores the importance of removing barriers to purchase, such as shipping costs, to drive conversions during this competitive shopping period.

Focus on offering free shipping as a baseline incentive, particularly during key promotional periods, to encourage higher conversion rates. Pair this with loyalty programs or exclusive bonuses for returning customers to foster long-term engagement.

Age Trends:

- Boomers were the most influenced by free shipping (75%), while Gen Z valued free gifts (19%) and loyalty points (14%) more than other groups.
- Millennials prioritized free shipping (55%) but also responded well to loyalty points (20%).

Gender Differences:

- Women were slightly more likely to prioritize free shipping (64%) compared to men (58%).
- Men showed a higher preference for loyalty points or rewards (16%) compared to women (13%).

BESIDES A DISCOUNT OR PRICE DROP, WHICH WOULD BE THE MOST INFLUENTIAL OFFER PERSUADING YOU TO BUY ONLINE?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Free shipping	75%	68%	55%	48%	64%	58%	61%
Loyalty points or rewards	10%	12%	20%	14%	13%	16%	14%
Free returns / exchanges	4%	7%	6%	14%	8%	8%	8%
Additional free gift of low value	9%	9%	16%	19%	12%	15%	13%
Free alterations, adjustments, enhancements	3%	3%	3%	5%	4%	4%	4%

Online Gift Purchase Tactics

Consumers employ a variety of tactics when purchasing gifts online, highlighting the importance of strategic engagement. Nearly half of all respondents (47%) prefer straightforward purchases by visiting a website and buying immediately—nearly double the percentage of any other option presented. However, tactics such as abandoning carts and waiting for email or text offers (28%) and browsing a website before leaving to await promotions (26%) are also common, emphasizing the role of behavioral data and triggered messaging across email and text. Notably, 21% of respondents reported delaying purchases until shipping deadlines for potential deals, underscoring the need for clear communication around last-minute incentives.

Retailers should capitalize on abandoned carts and browsing data by using behavioral data signals to trigger personalized email or text campaigns with timely offers. Marketers should also emphasize urgency during shipping deadlines to convert procrastinators into buyers.

Age Trends:

- Boomers (57%) were the most likely to visit a website and purchase outright.
- Gen Z (33%) were the most likely to use cart abandonment tactics.
- Millennials were evenly split across various tactics but showed a preference for visiting a website and buying (53%).

Gender Differences:

- Men were more inclined to buy immediately (50%) compared to women (45%).
- Women were slightly more likely to abandon carts and await offers (31% vs. 26% for men).

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT HOW YOU MAKE GIFT PURCHASES ONLINE, WHICH OF THESE TACTICS DO YOU USE?

	AGE GROUPS				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
I will visit a website and buy	57%	38%	53%	43%	45%	50%	47%
I will browse a website, leave and wait for email / text offers	19%	31%	27%	26%	25%	27%	26%
I will put things in an online cart, abandon it and wait for email / text offers	30%	24%	28%	33%	31%	26%	28%
I will visit a website but buy in a phsyical store	10%	14%	19%	22%	16%	18%	17%
I will visit a phsyical store but buy online	17%	16%	17%	21%	12%	23%	17%
I will wait until shipping deadlines for the best deal	18%	22%	29%	14%	21%	21%	21%

CONCLUSION

Year-Round Strategic Marketing for Sustained Growth

The 2024 holiday shopping insights provide a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior during the Black Friday and Cyber Monday season. While the survey focuses on specific holiday shopping patterns, the data and recommendations extend far beyond the holiday season, offering marketers actionable strategies for engaging consumers year-round in 2025 and beyond. By leveraging these insights, brands can craft personalized, timely, and impactful campaigns tailored to meet evolving consumer expectations.

One key takeaway is the importance of behavioral data collected across websites and digital touchpoints. Consumers leave a trail of intent through actions such as browsing products, abandoning carts, or waiting for email and text offers. By analyzing this data, brands gain a significant advantage in creating highly personalized marketing triggers, ensuring relevance and resonance. Email and text marketing remain critical tools for delivering these customized offers, particularly during high-stakes buying seasons.

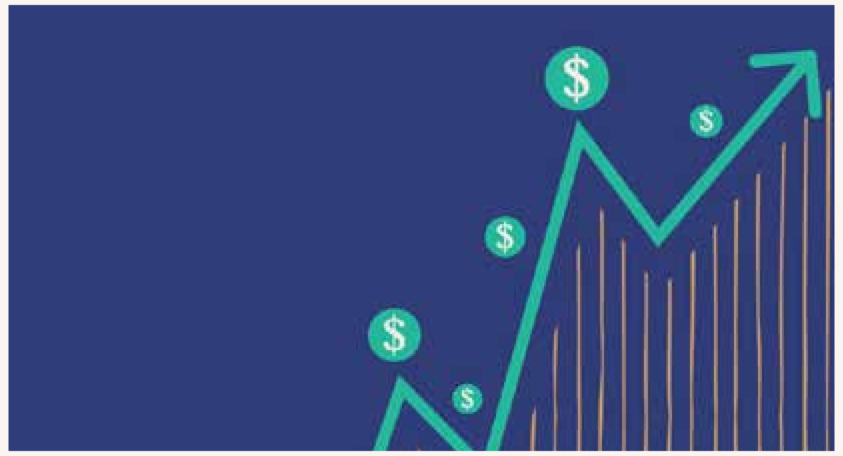
Sophisticated use of behavioral insights empowers marketers to optimize timing and messaging, driving both conversions and loyalty.

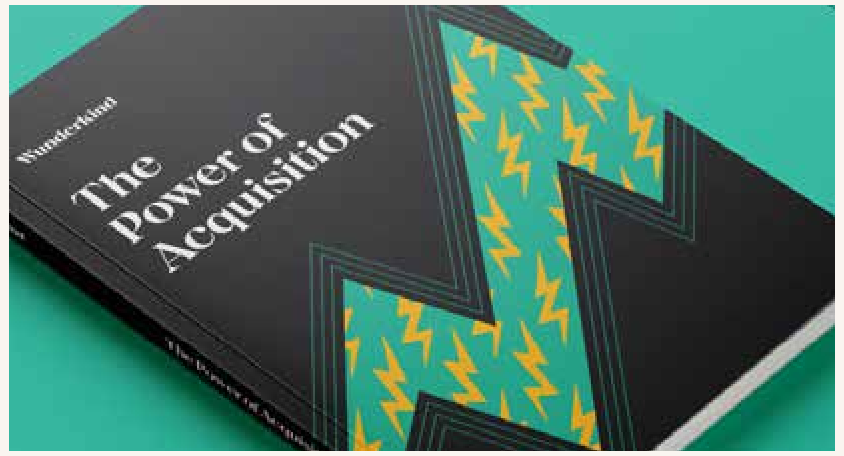
Another pivotal insight is the value of cultivating opt-in lists throughout the year. Building robust email and text marketing databases ensures that brands are well-positioned to activate these channels not only during the holiday season but also for other critical periods, such as back-to-school, Valentine's Day, or brand-specific promotional events. Consumers who opt in to receive marketing communications represent an engaged audience, ready to act on exclusive deals or personalized offers. Maintaining this connection year-round allows marketers to create consistent engagement, ensuring a strong ROI from these channels whenever they are deployed.

Finally, brands must remember that the tactics discussed—whether they involve strategic discounting, loyalty rewards, free shipping, or behavioral triggers—are adaptable to a wide range of consumer touchpoints.

The 2024 data underscores the diversity in consumer preferences, whether defined by generation, gender, or shopping intent. Senior marketers must adopt an agile mindset, leveraging these insights to create omnichannel strategies that meet customers where they are—both digitally and in-store. By doing so, brands can foster deeper connections with consumers, driving sustainable growth and outperforming competitors in an increasingly crowded marketplace.

In conclusion, the data and strategies outlined in this report are not merely a roadmap for the holiday season but a guide for 2025 as a whole. By adopting a data-driven, customer-centric approach to marketing, brands can turn insights into action, ensuring year-round success and stronger customer loyalty.





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Wunderkind is the leading AI-driven performance marketing solution that collects consent-based, first-party data and identifies anonymous traffic for brands in order to scale hyper-personalized one-to-one messages. Brands lean on the Wunderkind Identity Network, a proprietary database recognizing 9 billion devices and 1 billion consumers, and observes 2 trillion digital transactions every year, to trigger the most impactful offers to their target audience at the right moment and in the right channel. This proprietary data is accessed by Wunderkind's Autonomous Marketing Platform, an AI engine that integrates seamlessly into a brands' existing ESP to boost performance across email, text and advertising channels.

Wunderkind is the only performance solution that guarantees a lift in revenue for its clients and delivers over $5 billion in directly attributable revenue annually for brands across a number of industries, often ranking as a top 3 revenue channel in clients' own analytics platforms. Brands such as Harley-Davidson, Perry Ellis International and Shoe Carnival partner with Wunderkind to drive top-line revenue through its guaranteed results.

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