

Optimise

Internet Marketing News

Tips For Social Media Marketing This Holiday Season

Avoid feeling bland like a re-gifted fruitcake!

6 Digital Marketing Trends

Latest trends and predictions you need to know!

The Perfect Recipe For A Successful Holiday Campaign

Adding a sprinkle of Christmas to your marketing!

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Internet Marketing News

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Ben Bradshaw

MANAGING-EDITOR

Kyle Connolly

kyle.connolly@sponsoredlinx.com

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Mihajlo Kecic

mihajlo.kecic@sponsoredlinx.com

Kelly Chiu

kelly.chiu@sponsoredlinx.com

Various Graphics Designed by Freepik

WRITERS

Ben Bradshaw

Simon Golding

Nicholas Davis

Kyle Connolly

Rochelle Lyons

Rebecca Patrick

Sumeet Bhindi

Matthew Pearson

Marco Cacciola

OPTIMISE MAGAZINE IS PUBLISHED BY



ABN: 81 124 272 359

PO Box 399, Fortitude Valley, QLD, 4006

Phone: 1300 859 600

Fax: (07) 3892 7022

Email: optimise@sponsoredlinx.com

www.sponsoredlinx.com

All details and information correct at time of print

CONTENT SUBMISSIONS

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Welcome

Welcome to our final Optimise of 2017!

Looking back, 2017 has been an incredible year of growth at SponsoredLinX.

With our client base continuing to expand and our staff numbers almost doubled - safe to say it's been a year of change! We've built free Convertopages for every client, created a Facebook advertising team and launched our very own app LinX— which has changed the way we interact with our clients and how, in turn, they interact with their campaigns.

And it's only October!

Like you, we're all looking forward to Christmas!

Speaking of which, this issue is all about Christmas, and how marketing campaigns function over the holiday season. As we enter the final three months of the year, there's still so much you need to do! If you're anything like us, you've got one of your busiest quarters ahead!

We have a detailed breakdown of the holiday season and how you can adjust your campaigns to suit. How do you ensure your business keeps turning a profit despite most people slowing their spending down in preparation of the new year? Check that out on page (26-27).

We'll also examine how to manage your festive season themed social media to ensure engagement, the tech trends to keep an eye out for next year, and a look back at the history of successful Christmas campaigns.

Simon ensures you get organic rankings in your Christmas stocking, we look at how millennials are the kings and queens of online shopping, and even how to curate your email campaigns to suit the silly season.

In addition, before the beginning of 2018, we'll help you with what steps to take if you're struggling to get conversions on your content! Many businesses we deal with on a daily basis have some great content, but the quality of their content doesn't add up to conversions. Kyle walks you through that on page (11-13).

We've managed to jam pack this edition with tools that'll help guide your marketing at this crucial time of the year. As always, the team at SponsoredLinX are only a call away should you have anything else that needs asking.

That's it from me, I hope you all have a merry Christmas and a fantastic new year ahead!

Ben Bradshaw

Editor in Chief, Optimise Magazine

CEO & Founder of SponsoredLinX

Meet the...

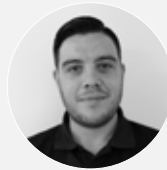
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Rebecca Patrick



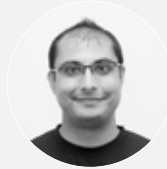
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Matthew Pearson



Nicholas Davis



Marco Cacciola



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THE HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS MARKETING

Looking back on Christmas campaigns still relevant today!



By Rochelle Lyons



Without a doubt, Coca Cola and Macy's are the Santa and Mrs Claus of Christmas campaigns. Celebrated in over 160 countries, it has become the most popular holiday around the world. Throughout the various countries and religions, Christmas is observed in many different manners. Nevertheless, these following businesses sparked something significant in their Christmas campaigns that spread worldwide and remain relevant to many of us today.

MACY'S WINDOW DISPLAY

In the months leading up to Christmas you've probably noticed retailers all over the world opting to ornament their storefronts with festive decor. But how did this come about? With the widespread availability of plate glass in the late 1800's, store owners began to build large windows spanning the length of their store to display their goods. However, it was R. H. Macy of Macy's Department Stores that first constructed holiday-specific presentations and an in-store Santa for children to meet. This was taken a step further in 1914 with the introduction of hydraulic lifts under each window allowing the artisans to build their displays in a basement and raise the display overnight for a dramatic unveiling event. Many retailers have since adopted this window display advertising campaign yet Macy's continues to reign in as most popular.

COCA-COLA'S FATHER CHRISTMAS

Have you ever wondered why that jolly red guy that delivers presents on Christmas Eve has so many different names? Father Christmas, Saint Nicholas, Santa Claus. Well, there's a reason behind it all. Many people today believe that Coca-Cola are behind the invention of the original Santa Claus and while that isn't exactly accurate, the company deserves some credit for implementing the image of our modern day Santa into our minds. In the early 1930's, Coca-Cola commissioned the help of an artist named Haddon Sundblom. He styled the character after Saint Nicholas, the Bishop of Myra in the 4th Century who wore red and white robes (conveniently enough for Coca-Cola) and was known for his generosity to children and the poor. Coca-Cola continued to use this portly, bearded man for the next 30 years. Until this depiction, Father Christmas was consistently fixed and standardised, influenced by folklore and religion. What started as a campaign to remind people they

could still drink a cold soda in the chillier seasons, soon became a worldwide phenomenon-proving that the right marketing can immensely change the future of your business.

MONTGOMERY WARD PUBLISHING RUDOLPH

For many years, publishing giant Montgomery Ward would buy and give away colouring books each Christmas. Eventually, the retailer came to the conclusion that creating their own Christmas themed book would save money. So came about Robert L. May, whose story about the famous ninth reindeer was written as a poem in the same metre as 'Twas The Night Before Christmas'. Distributing 2.4 million copies in its first year of publication, many were quick in adapting to this Christmas character, turning it into an animation and song. Adding to the Christmas spirit, Montgomery Ward handed the rights over to it's creator, Robert May, who was struggling financially after the passing of his wife. Rudolph therefore ceased to exist for Montgomery Ward, becoming a product in his own rights.

HASBRO'S FIRST TOY COMMERCIAL

Almost 65 years ago, toy manufacturer Hasbro Inc. made the daring decision to market a toy on television. That toy was Mr Potato Head. Although unsurprising that advertisers would take advantage of televised media as it came into popularity, something that was significant about the commercial was that Mr Potato Head was specifically marketed to children. Proving incredibly successful, selling over one million units within the first year, this opened the platform to many who wished to directly encourage children to request a company's product from their own parents. This innovative experiment proved successful for the company, and others following in Hasbro's steps, with toys and their commercials remaining very pertinent in today's society.

That's the history of some of the most popular Christmas campaigns to date. Have you ever thought about implementing any of these strategies into your own business? Creating a character, writing a book, or decorating your shop window? As you can see, success may come from something seemingly insignificant. While the holiday season still represents love and generosity to marketers, it also means having to find a winning formula that makes them stand out. One thing is for sure, these businesses made their mark on the holiday season.

TIPS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Avoid feeling bland like a re-gifted fruitcake!



By Rebecca Patrick

Christmas season is the time of year where festive marketing returns with a bang. Still doing the same old thing on your social media platforms year after year? We've got five creative tips that'll engage your audience this holiday season. From giveaways to custom Snapchat filters, we have the know how to help boost your social media marketing this Christmas.

1. DESIGN A CUSTOM SNAPCHAT GEOFILTER

There is nothing that a creative and fun geofilter can't make more exciting. Get into the holiday spirit and custom make a Snapchat geofilter that not only celebrates the season, but markets your products and services alongside the most popular holiday of the year! A custom Snapchat geofilter is a fun way for consumers to share and interact with your brand. It's an easy and cost effective strategy to get your followers to share your brand through an ultimate example of word-of-mouth over the busy Christmas period. These small features can help your brand in a big way.

2. HOST A HOLIDAY THEMED CHAT

Consumers and followers often seek advice to assist them through this time of year. Using a social media platform with a live chat function, such as Facebook, can aid in creating a live Q&A event for your business. Create a post asking your followers to submit any questions they have or advice they are seeking for the festive season. If you, your brand or your employees know the answer, compile the questions into a list and use them for your Q&A. Hosting a live Q&A video is an engaging way to connect with your followers and provide them important information they may need throughout the holidays.

3. CREATE A CHRISTMAS GIVEAWAY

Followers love a good giveaway, so why not give them one? This Christmas season, create a festive themed holiday giveaway for your followers in order to encourage brand participation and spread awareness of your business. Collaborate with other businesses, or simply create a giveaway of your own and use your social media platforms to get you started. It's as simple as asking your followers to comment on the post to go into the draw to win, or get creative and base the competition around consumer participation. Get your followers to post a photo with your favourite product in their most festive outfit, or a video of them using your products while wearing an ugly Christmas sweater. The opportunities are endless in the holiday season!

4. MAKE A 360° HOLIDAY THEMED VIDEO

Give your followers a behind the scenes look to both your business and your brand with a 360° holiday themed video. Use this time of year to open up the doors to your business and let your followers in. Now available on multiple networks including Facebook and Youtube, this engaging format provides you with the opportunity to allow users to experience your business from all different angles. You can film the opening of secret santa gifts between your work colleagues, a Christmas

sale event or a new look at the decorations you've displayed to show your Christmas spirit. A virtual 360° experience is a format that stands out to your followers and consumers. Think out of the gift box this festive season and take advantage of new technology to market your business in a creative way.

5. POST PINTEREST HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

Pinterest is a popular sharing platform that is often overlooked by businesses when marketing their brand. This photo sharing platform provides users with the opportunity to access location data, purchase links and download information directly via the app. This holiday season, create Christmas themed pins that feature your products and services in order to allow users to add them to their gift wish lists. By doing so, you can incorporate appropriate e-commerce and store location data into your posts to ensure that Pinterest users can find you.

Christmas season is a busy time for all involved. Keep things creative with these five social media tips to engage your consumer this holiday season. Start planning your posts early on to avoid any mistakes or blunders and continue to target your preferred market audience with your content. Incorporating the festive season into your posts is an ideal strategy to engage your consumers at a busy time of year.



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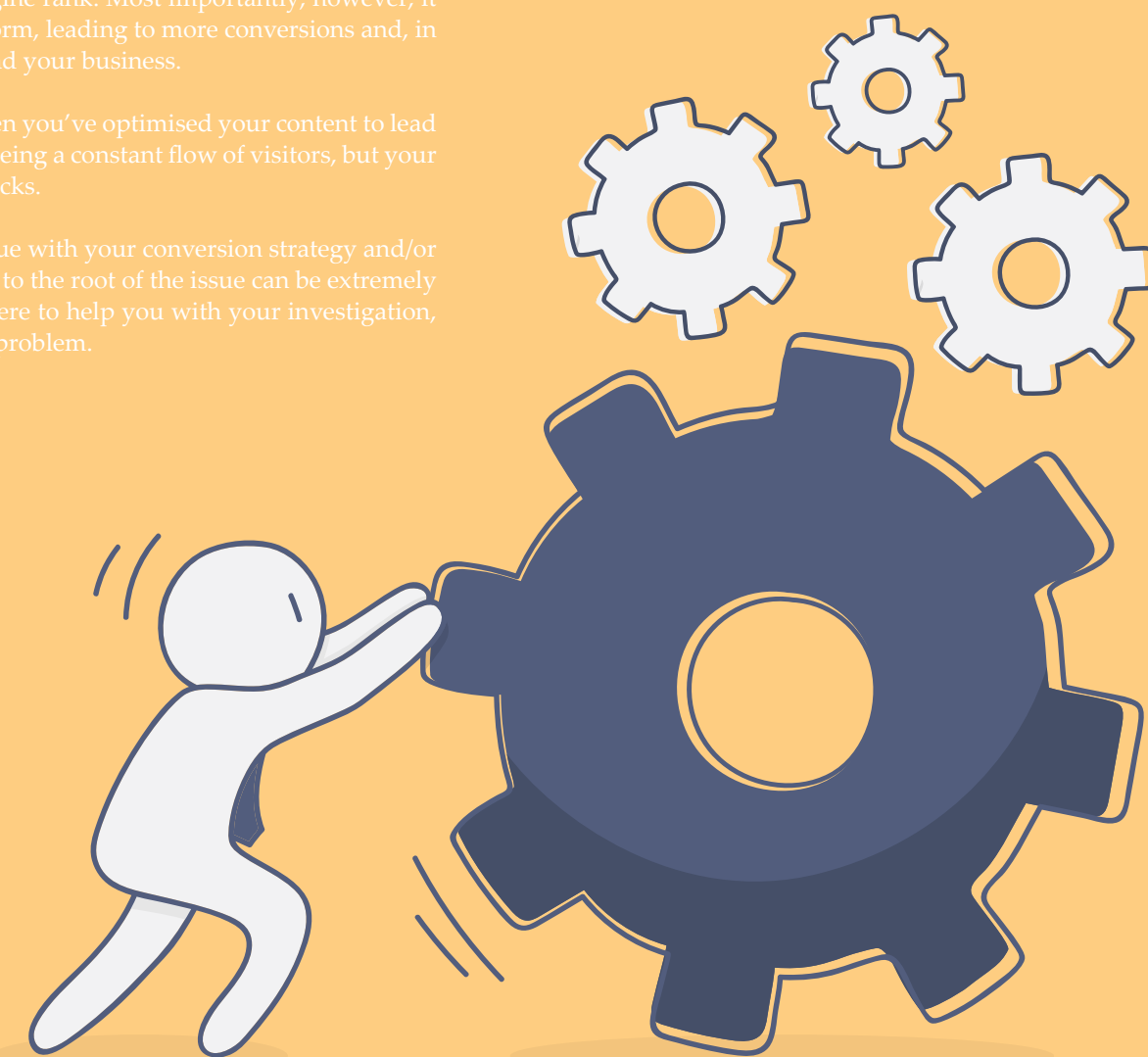
7 steps to get back on track!

By Kyle Connolly

Content. It's one of my favourite words because it's so versatile. Content is created to provide value to your customer base, so they become more trusting and familiar with your brand. It bolsters your search engine rank. Most importantly, however, it gives your users a platform, leading to more conversions and, in turn, revenue for you and your business.

But what do you do when you've optimised your content to lead to conversions, you're seeing a constant flow of visitors, but your conversion rate, well, sucks.

Evidently, there's an issue with your conversion strategy and/or sales funnel, but getting to the root of the issue can be extremely challenging. Well, I'm here to help you with your investigation, and hopefully, fix your problem.



7. ADJUST, DETERMINE, RINSE AND REPEAT

The more you learn about conversion optimisation, the more you'll see it's as much an art as it is a science. There are snake-oil salesmen who'll come to you and claim a myriad of tips and tricks to instantly multiply your conversions, but the evidence for this is frivolous. As a business owner, you are better off learning the fundamentals and applying your own changes, and, if need be, employing an individual or an agency who'll keep everything fresh. It's best to discover what works for you personally, rather than what works for others.



MILLENNIALS TAKE LEAD ON MOBILE SHOPPING THIS FESTIVE SEASON

How you can prepare for it!



By Rebecca Patrick

As the era of mobile shopping is on the rise, there's no doubt that this Christmas season is the best time to embrace it. This year the millennial audience is set to take the lead on online Christmas shopping with more than 50% predicted to do more shopping on their mobile devices than they will in-store. So, what does this mean for you? Much like their parents before them, millennials seek exceptional customer experiences. However, rather than searching for in-store and personal customer service, they want remarkable digital experiences. In preparation, we've got some tips for taking on the millennial audience and embracing mobile shopping this holiday season.

GO MOBILE OR MISS OUT

As the biggest users of mobile apps and smartphones, millennials will dominate online shopping this Christmas. In Australia last year, 26% of purchases during the peak festive season were done through a mobile device. This number is set to grow with more than 60% of millennials predicted to undertake more mobile shopping than they did the previous year. For businesses that don't currently have a mobile site, you're at risk of missing out on an opportunity to

receive a significant amount of revenue from the millennial audience. By not giving them access to your products through the channel they use the most, your business will struggle to effectively target millennials throughout the busiest time of the year.

It's imperative for businesses to focus on optimising their mobile sites in order to create an effortless and easy-to-use experience for their shoppers. More than half of millennial shoppers say they're most likely to complain via a business' social media platform about any poor online shopping experiences. By doing so, they're spreading word of businesses' failures for all future prospective shoppers to access.

BE PREPARED

More often than not, people are getting organised well before Christmas in order to gather their presents and complete their shopping as early as possible. In 2016, the last week in November was the busiest week for purchases here in Australia with sales rising by 192%. It's ideal for businesses to begin their preparation for the holiday season before November to ensure that they're catering



to the early bird shoppers. In doing so, you're providing your business with more opportunity to receive revenue from the millennial mobile market early on.

With over 32% of Australian buyers last year searching a business' website and social media platforms before making a final purchase, the number is expected to grow this coming season. We recommend that SMB's ensure that their social media sites are effectively promoting their brand's products and services. By clearly displaying the goods and services you offer and keeping your social platforms up to date, your followers are able to view your products and any future sales or promotions. This will drive online purchases forward and increase the opportunity for you to gain more revenue.

GIVE THEM SOMETHING MORE

Obviously, a millennial audience likes having options. Often, a bad review or experience can simply come from the payment options that you have available. When it comes to providing

alternate payment choices, it benefits your business by providing consumers with multiple options. With Paypal, Apple Pay and After Pay on the rise, now is the time to incorporate these methods in order to further utilise the resources that have been made available to you.

Considering the influence that this following has on the ecommerce industry, it's important for businesses to adjust to catering to their market. As the millennial audience is set to take the lead on buying this festive season, the lack of options found within your online portals could potentially hinder your chance of growth and profit gain for your business.

With millennials set to break another Christmas shopping record this holiday season, there is no doubt as to whether or not businesses should target their strategies towards mobile usage. In order to increase your chances of receiving the most profit possible from this time of year, we recommend you adapt to the new millennial age in order to succeed and grow. Whether it's through introducing mobile shopping to your business, starting your marketing process early, or finding a way to cater to the millennial audience, each process will put you one step ahead this Christmas.

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS ORGANIC RANKINGS

Engaging your SEO to rank over Christmas!

By Simon Golding

As the festive season approaches, eCommerce businesses are working on their online presence to ensure they're in the best position possible to capture the annual tsunami of online Christmas sales.

But how can businesses best capitalise on this spending frenzy? Part of the solution is strategically increasing budgets within Google AdWords (Google Shopping in particular) in the months leading up to Christmas. But the biggest winners online are always the sites which hold the organic rankings for popular Christmas search terms. And so the question becomes, how can you make sure it's you sitting in the top organic search results during Christmas and not your competitor?

The easy part of the answer is "Run SEO!" as it's the best practice for increasing your organic rankings. The harder part of the answer relates to when to engage an SEO campaign with Christmas sales in mind. This can be difficult to answer with all the variables in play. However, we've got some tips to help you along your way.

SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE

The first factor to take into account that can alter the timeline is competition levels. If you're in a highly competitive industry like selling shoes online, you can expect a much longer lead time in SEO compared to a relatively low competition industry such as custom made shoes in a specific location. This is because there are more sites to get in front of in a high competition industry, and they're harder sites to outrank as well. So, if you see major brands on page one of Google for search phrases you want to rank for, be prepared for a long lead time in order to secure good outcomes.

REACH FOR THE RANKS

Another factor to take into account is what page one rankings you already have, and how far you are from page one for the target keywords. The closer you are to page one for the keywords you're chasing, the faster you'll get there. Likewise the more page one rankings you already have for keywords in a particular industry, the faster you'll get to the front for other keywords in that same industry.

So, bringing all this together, presuming you have a quality website with at least five pages, a general rule of thumb is to engage SEO six months ahead of the point by which you hope to have strong rankings. By the sixth month mark you can expect to be ranking on page one organically for roughly a fifth of the keywords you're chasing. If you're in a good starting position you may make it to the front of the pack as quickly as month three which is an incredibly fast outcome for SEO. At the other extreme, in highly competitive industries where you don't have any rankings, we'd expect a campaign timeline of approximately 12 months to secure excellent results.

So ensure you plan well in advance to be unwrapping strong Christmas sales with organic rankings!



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- ✓ **USER FRIENDLY**
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An illustration featuring a rocket launch. In the foreground, a black tablet is held by two hands, displaying the title '6 DIGITAL MARKETING TRENDS' and subtitle 'Latest trends and predictions you need to know!'. The background shows a rocket launching from a cloud, with a paper airplane flying in the sky. The scene is set against a dark blue night sky with stars and clouds.

6 DIGITAL MARKETING TRENDS

Latest trends and predictions you need to know!

By Ben Bradshaw

The constant flow of change is complex, yet interwoven in the world of digital marketing.

The trends don't work alone, rather they work together to accelerate and amplify the way we market our businesses. Faster and cheaper telecommunication, as well as wifi, made broadband as essential as electricity. Mobile phones gave rise to social networks, their in-built cameras adding unquantifiable amounts of content in an already deafening online world.

Faster change and complexity are now the norm.

With all that said, which digital marketing trends are driving change, and how do we keep up?



1. PAID DIGITAL MARKETING IS NO LONGER AN OPTION, IT'S VITAL

I don't just say that because I run a digital marketing agency. Promise!

Honestly, digital marketing has never really been free. Social networks, however, gave us a short taste of that. Not anymore.

When most of us (myself included) discovered digital marketing, the only way to pay for attention was banner ads on websites. Yahoo was the king of that. That was the 90s.

Then in the early 2000s, the rise of Google led to a new digital advertising option: search advertising.

This was a way to make money that offered rivers of gold as it was relatively cheap to advertise online. Like any good business though, Google changed the rules and increased the rates, much like Facebook have in the last few years.

Now, it's a two horse race.

The concentration of revenue and the ownership of platforms means that advertising options may be complex, but are still concentrated. Snapchat is trying to wedge their way in after going public, but it has some major work to do if it wishes to make a dent on the two massive incumbents of Facebook and Google. Today, the way online marketing works mean you either need the skills within your company or you need a partner.



2. AUTOMATION IS ESSENTIAL

One thing the rise of social networks did was humanise the web.

Being online was no longer the domain of the geeks. It was sleek and easy. You published a Facebook post or a blog, you could Tweet, or upload your own videos with absolute ease. You created your own content and built an organic distribution by growing your follower count.

This is now more complex with more networks, more diverse digital advertising options, and more types of content.

So how does one keep up?

More tools...or better ones? The choices within digital technology have also exploded, and the number of tech tools available for marketers has been estimated at over 4000. With that sheer volume, the only way to manage the rising complexity is with marketing automation. There are many options, which means choosing is difficult.

There are the platforms that aim to be "all-in-one" tools, like Marketo, Infusionsoft and Hubspot to name a few, that can assist in scaling your marketing.

There are also tools for growing your social media followers with automation like SociallyRich for Instagram and Social Quant for Twitter.

Then there are tools for moderating comments – BrandBastion for example.

Marketing automation is still in its early phase, and the next trend is where it'll start to get interesting.

3. LIVE VIDEO IS WHERE IT'S AT

Live streaming video is, in my humble opinion, the hottest trend in digital marketing right now.

As per usual, Google was the first to innovate with the advent of Google Hangouts.

However, an app called Meerkat was the first live video streaming app that caught mass attention. Then it was Blab, and then Periscope. Only the latter survives thanks to its acquisition by a small startup called Twitter. You may have heard of them.

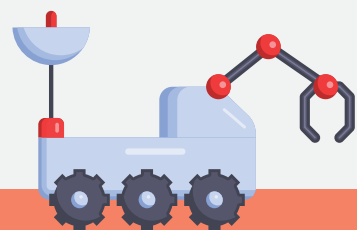
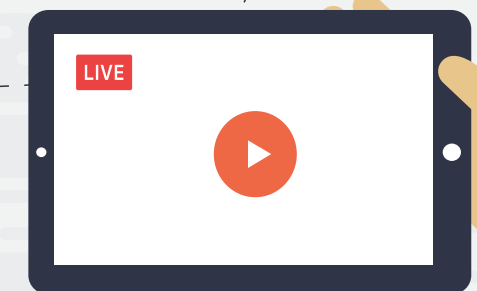
When Facebook Live was launched in 2015 though, the game changed.

So, why live stream?

My cousin Mark Zuckerberg* has suggested that people comment ten times more and watch 300% longer on live videos over regular ones. In terms of marketing, that kind of engagement is gold.

However, it can feel a bit saturated when everyone's doing it. I know my timeline is full of random companies live streaming launches nobody but themselves care about. So, be careful when beaming yourself to the world without creating a presence first.

**Mark Zuckerberg is not my cousin*



4. THE RISE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

'The rise of AI' is a term that either frightens or excites you. If you're conjuring up images of Arnold "I'll Be Back" Schwarzenegger, relax. That's not the kind of AI I'm talking about (not yet, anyway).

People sometimes associate the term with losing their jobs to machines, however the positive is that AI is removing the 'drone' work out of many jobs. It's becoming a necessity to scale repetitive and often boring human tasks.

Ever since HAL in 'Space Odyssey 2001' we've been predicting the rise of robots, so it's a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy. We know not to fear machines, rather we started integrating them. In the decades since 'Space Odyssey,' we've seen the emergence of the personal computer, the internet, mobile phones and social networks. The intersection of all these things is changing business, changing entertainment, changing our lives.

Mobile and social technology have made us all publishers. We're now all photographers, video directors, and writers that share by the million every minute.

This is why we need "machines."

The sheer amount of content is ridiculous. And impossible to manage ourselves.

As the volume of data increases, the scale of the noise means trying to make sense of it. As humans, we need the machines to make sense and cope with the absolute barrage of content we all produce. This now means we will need artificial intelligence marketing.

Facebook suggestions, news feed algorithms and trending topics - **That's AI**
LinkedIn providing job matches between business and client - **That's AI**
Pinterest boosting image recognition and search - **That's AI**
Facebook telling you who's in the photos you've taken - **That's (kinda creepy) AI**

So, artificial intelligence has just begun. And, it gets stronger by the day.

You shouldn't worry though, the machines are here to help, not take over.

For now.....

When I think about it, Facebook just had to shut down their AI Robots after they invented their own language and started talking to each other.

We're doomed!

5. THE RHYTHM OF THE ALGORITHM

Google's algorithms were the internet's first example of the machines controlling what content you saw when you searched for it. Then, Facebook started filtering results in your newsfeed that harmed your organic reach with the implementation of their own algorithms.

Today, algorithms help filter what you see in your email inbox. Marketing emails now live in the very rarely clicked "Promotions" tab in your Gmail account.

As marketers, we need to keep on top of this and ensure we optimise content that rises above email and search engine filters.

The battle between marketers and algorithms rages on.

I've broken down AI Marketing into three steps:

1. **Collect.** Computers collect and collate data that we as humans can no longer tabulate
2. **Reason.** AI makes sense of the data and performs insights
3. **Act.** AI uses this insight to create content and messaging that influences consumer decisions.

So, when's it being used? Well, all the time. You just don't notice it.

6. INFLUENCER MARKETING STEPS UP

Social media created global topic villages.

Bloggers curated content on food, music, fashion and thousands of other passions. Some so incredibly niche, yet attracting thousands of loyal followers across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. They constructed their own credibility and trust built on their own content.

As the online noise got increasingly louder and reaching your target market became more difficult, these 'Influencers' began attracting brand attachment. They became conduits, as brands used them to push their products or services from a trusted source. And, for a while, it worked with relative ease.

Now, there is a bigger challenge.

And that lies with the rise of apps.

Most of us got use to a digital sphere where you created content on your site, and then drove traffic and converted that traffic into readers or customers. The reliance on apps is a massive fundamental shift that can't be ignored.

The transition of an internet of websites to an internet of mobile and social platforms like Facebook is no longer a transition. It's happened. It's a systematic change that left many publishers and businesses unsure of how to make a profit.

When I discovered social media, one of the most exciting things about it was the total democratisation of publishing and even marketing. I no longer had to pay the media moguls or the gatekeepers for the content I wanted.

But the internet of apps is happening.

A perfect example is BuzzFeed, who received 500 million visitors a month and then dropped to below 470 million in a short period of time throughout 2016. Their solution was to move their content via external clicks from social media pages.

This emergence of apps and platforms has some big challenges for marketers. New growth strategies have to be created for views and readers. What BuzzFeed did was create a 'Network Integration Strategy'- publishing content and then pushing it through other hubs like Snapchat, Pinterest, YouTube and Instagram. Their strategy is now one of 'creating', publishing those creations to their website, uploading it to apps and then distributing on multiple social channels. Then they keep measuring and iterating from the big data.

So, does that mean Mark Zuckerberg is the new gate keeper? As if he doesn't have enough to do!

With all that said, what should you do?

1. Hire geeks like me that can read the data that allows you to keep adapting
2. Use automation to manage and scale the complexity of it all
3. Keep an eye on tools using AI
4. Experiment and then implement what works
5. Make use of efficient paid digital advertising
6. Tell stories. Stand out. Try new things.

So, keep learning, keep evolving, and keep reinventing. We're in a world of constant change, and what works today may not tomorrow.



Help your business rank on Google Search with a tailored SEO campaign.

As with any science-based methodology, we too have a SponsoredLinX Search Engine Optimisation service which follows a procedure to secure a profitable outcome for our clients.

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CREATING YOUR DIGITAL CULTURE FOOTPRINT

Investing and establishing an online society!

By Sumeet Bhindi

The culture of the digital industry has revolutionised small to medium enterprises (SME's), influencing the way we live in today's dynamic society both professionally and personally. The digital portrayal of your business in our heavily electronic-based era is bound to impact your business, although not always positively. To ensure you set a solid online foundation, we have a few tips for you to create a reputable digital culture footprint.

RETAIN CUSTOMERS BY INTERACTING

Customer interaction is a vital key to building and retaining an influential relationship with your audience. There are several ways you can open your brand to feedback, such as posting questions on social media accounts or allowing comments on your blog posts. In order to actually develop a connection with your audience, you must also engage with them. Always put your best efforts into responding to their queries and comments, and sign off with your name and position title. To make things more interesting, try creating a video response, or be light hearted and humorous with an image or GIF reply.

ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY

This one is for the staff. You don't want your employees coming to work, not wanting to put in their best efforts and enjoy their day. To lift company spirits, inspire them to get involved with the digital culture your brand represents. Encourage and reward your staff to get creative with the business profile. This can empower employees and make them feel more valued. Another great incentive is to organise frequent meetings for your team to have their input and make them feel like they're part of the process.

You may have seen the team at SponsoredLinX celebrate little holidays like Superhero Day and World Food Day – these can also be great for not only the staff, but a innovative way to show off your culture online.

BE HUMAN

This is what you can do to keep the atmosphere at work light and fun while at the same time creating a digital culture footprint. With most brands, you want your digital culture to show that you're not just business all the time – you're human too, just like your audience. Have active social media profiles like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn (even encourage your employees to create their own if they don't already). Begin sharing content like blogs, client reviews, and photos of your work environment. Start putting a face to the name by posting images of staff members for events, holidays or awards. And since we're all about Christmas currently, get into the spirit of the holidays by editing your profile pictures on your media platforms to reflect the festive season (such as red, green and gold for Christmas), and post photos of employees in seasonal clothing like ugly Christmas sweaters.

We've all witnessed the evolution of the digital industry, and with it, the influence your online culture can have on your sales and offline reputation. Remember to always keep working on your culture and know that it's about showing this in the digital footprint. At SponsoredLinX, we believe it's important to flaunt your culture, for your clients and prospective customers to know your company and your employees, to show that work isn't just a way to earn money, but a fun and rewarding opportunity to fill your days.



THE PERFECT RECIPE FOR A SUCCESSFUL HOLIDAY CAMPAIGN

Adding a sprinkle of christmas to your marketing!



By Rochelle Lyons

With the holiday season rapidly approaching, it's time for business owners and marketers to think about their holiday campaigns. Given that each holiday season brings about new trends, it's important to know what your consumers are looking for. Even more vital, is knowing how to show them you have what they want. We've put together a list of ingredients that, when put together, can result in a delicious holiday campaign.

A DASH OF SPECIAL OFFERS

There are several ways to promote your brand over Christmas including email marketing campaigns, holiday-specific ads through Google AdWords, and using a specific landing page for your seasonal products.

Some have forgotten the benefits of email marketing, and are afraid their emails go unopened - but it all depends on your approach to it. Little do people know that the right strategy can gain them a large percentage of their online sales during the holiday season. How? By promoting holiday offers and providing relevant content!

Some great ideas include:

- 12 days of Christmas, where you can have a 24-hour limited sale on 12 different products across a 12 day period.
- A gift guide email displaying cheap little knick-knacks that could make great stocking stuffers. Alternatively, depending on your industry, you could split up your products into categories like Men/Women/Children, Gifts under \$50/\$20, and more.
- You could also promote personalised products which is popular among those looking for gift ideas for their partners.
- Ask people to leave reviews or engage online for a chance to win a free Christmas giveaway.

While these emails are a great idea to get more traffic to your website, you should continue with the holiday theme and direct them to a specific landing page that further promotes your specials. This would also help with your Google AdWords advertising, as you could use specific keywords and attract more relevant visitors. Additionally, it would lead to a more relevant page, increasing your quality score and ad rank.



A SPRINKLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is something you should be using in your day-to-day marketing campaigns already, but it becomes more important as the holiday season approaches. Consider sharing fun photos of yourself or staff getting into the Christmas spirit with seasonal clothing, or just simply write or share a post about the holiday season. Another great way to get people involved with your brand is by organising a Christmas themed competition. There are several ways to go about this and it can prove useful for targeting existing customers, or drawing in new ones.

Here are some of our favourite contest ideas:

- **Photo Challenge** - Ask your shoppers to post a photo of themselves with one of your very own products for a chance to win a prize.
- **Guessing Games** - This is like that cliché "how many jellybeans are in this jar?" game, but more centred around your brand (although you could probably still win some traffic with jelly beans). Try taking a partial image of one of your products, or hide one under a blanket and get people to guess the product. Reward the person who guesses right or gets the closest.
- **Tag-A-Friend** - Mostly used for Facebook and Instagram, this is a simple way to have people notice your brand. All you have to do is host a giveaway, and the rules to enter are easy: tag a friend or two.
- **Voting Promotions** - There are two different ways you can do this: get your customers to share opinions about the product, or post a topic (such as 'what is the most unique way you've used our product?') and allow your customers to post their photos or comments and the person with the most 'likes', wins!

Competitions are an entertaining way to drive sales and combining it with your social media makes it a great place to promote your content. However, before you begin this, you should ensure your social media profiles provide up-to-date information about your business. You could also make your page look more relevant with a holiday themed profile picture and header photo.

A DOLLOP OF MOBILE SHOPPER OPTIMISATION

Consumers are using their mobile devices for just about anything, including finding specials, purchasing gifts and comparing prices. With mobile traffic showing a significant increase over desktop traffic during the holiday season, it's important that you optimise your website for mobile use. Many marketers increase their ad spending during the holiday season, particularly for local search where a customer can look online for what they need, find your business, and come in store to shop. Additionally, if you have a mobile app, the holiday season would be a great time to reward them for their customer loyalty by providing discounts exclusive to them.

A SCOOP OF CHRISTMAS GIFTS

This can be broken down into several parts, but all remains fairly simple. Think about the things that everyone loves to receive as a Secret Santa gift. What comes to mind? Christmas hampers and gift cards, right? They're easy, they're cheap, they work for everyone. So where is your business' Christmas hamper, and do you have gift cards available? If neither of these are options in your industry, you could try placing impulse buys strategically throughout your store, particularly before the service counter. And, if you're feeling really kind, you could include a small gift with Christmas present purchases.

AND THE CHERRY ON TOP - HOLIDAY DECOR

Finally, you don't want to forget the need to decorate your store and get into the Christmas spirit yourself. Atmosphere is just as important as all these other ingredients. It doesn't have to be extravagant - some tinsel here and there would suffice, or even a cute little Christmas Tree in the corner. You could also offer a gift wrapping service if you're skilled enough to do so, but naturally, what you offer all depends on your budget.

It's important to put more time, effort and money into promoting yourself during the holiday season if you want to increase your reach. With these tips you will find yourself better prepared, earning a lot more in sales, and possibly even having fun with advertising - after all, tis the season to be jolly.

SEND YOUR ADS TO THE RIGHT LANDING PAGE

Tips to change the future of your business!

By Matthew Pearson

People that are looking for your service or product are clicking on your ad! That’s great! Now what?

Your Google AdWords ad is there to serve one purpose, to turn a customer’s curiosity into interest. After that click, their interest needs to be turned into action. This is where we require something of the potential customer that is pretty hard to come by; a tiny bit of effort and maybe a little courage. To your customers, perhaps making a call can seem a bit awkward and filling in a contact form can seem harder than it actually is.

People are visiting your website because they’re interested in the solution you provide, but the wrong landing page can drive them away. This is why we need to make it as easy as possible to call your business, buy your product, send an email, or fill in a contact form. Here are a few important things you need on your page in order make it user-friendly for your audience.

FAST LOADING TIMES

If your page takes longer to load than it takes for you to say “This website is

slow”, the more likely it is your potential customer is going to be reaching for that back button. A survey conducted by Google found that over half of web users will abandon a page if it doesn’t load within 3 seconds. A fast site results in a good user experience which, in turn, leads to a higher conversion rate.

SMALL TEXT BLOCKS

Your customers want a solution, not homework! The bigger and denser the block of text, the less likely it’ll be read. Always aim to avoid jargon by keeping it short and to the point. If you feel you have a lot to say, try breaking the text up with visuals. Keep it digestible, and don’t forget to make it relevant to your AdWords ad!

A GREAT OFFER

Calling a business can be out of your customers comfort zone and filling in a contact form takes time and effort. You need an offer that makes it worth pushing past the potential awkwardness by creating a compelling call-to-action and ensuring your contact forms are simple. Tell them why they should

choose you over your competitors, and why they should act now rather than later! In turn, your landing page needs to be an extension of the ad – if it’s written in your ad, it needs to be justified in your landing page.

THE RIGHT LAYOUT

Ever been trying to find something on a shelf for a long time before realising it was directly in front of you? There are certain places that people instinctively look for contact details such as phone numbers and emails, and if they don’t find them where they think they would be, chances are they’ll leave. Ensure your contact details are at the top right hand side of the page, and try a click to call button – we promise it’s worthwhile!

These few simple and actionable tips to improve your website can show positive results in your traffic and conversions. This could change the future of your business and they only require the smallest amount of time and effort. Once these are in place, you will have the best chance of making the most of the Christmas rush (and every day after that).



MYTHBUSTER STOCKING STUFFERS

New sites and how they affect SEO!

By Nicholas Davis

Are you thinking about investing in a new website as part of a New Year’s resolution? This is a decision that can make or break a business when it comes to digital marketing. You have to put your trust in the right developer and be prepared to go through several drafts before sending it live. Unfortunately, some web developers will promise you the world to get a sale and only when it’s too late will you realise you’re stuck in a contract you don’t want. As experts in the digital marketing industry, we can help you separate fact from fiction and save you stress when it comes to revamping your brand.

Mobile Subdomains Are Out:	CONFIRMED
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Have you ever noticed that on a desktop you could be ranking in position three, but on mobile, you’ll be in position 15? Google treats a mobile subpage (m.website.com) as a separate page when indexing. If your site does this it might be time to consider rebuilding your website, or engage with someone who can make it mobile responsive.

You Can Save Money By Stopping SEO While A Site Is Built:	BUSTED
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Any web developer who truly understands SEO would never tell you to stop your campaign. A new site launched with the blessing of a good SEO expert will thrive. If you try to build your site alone or with someone who only understands basic SEO concepts, you can lose everything you’ve worked tirelessly to achieve. It is essential for you to get a thumbs up from an SEO expert before your site is built.

Let’s Erase The Current Site And Start From Scratch:	BUSTED
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Here’s the scenario: a client has a 25 page website, 13 of which draw regular traffic. A web developer recommends simplifying it to a five page site. So what do you do? Your content and your

URLs are like anchors. If you take a page that is 100% relevant to a subject matter and condense it with four other pages, you are left with something that is 20% relevant and less likely to rank. Condensing a site is not an overnight change, it should be undertaken with an informed risk assessment by someone who understands what users and engines are looking for. This is why when we use Convertopages, we use one page for each subject matter, i.e. engine repairs for one page and roadworthy certificates on another - even if it’s the same business.

Your Website Will Be Ready In A Week:	BUSTED
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A great landing page can certainly be made in a week, but a whole site? From experience, this claim never stacks up with quality. Anyone who builds you a site in a week is not taking the delicate care that it needs. A week wouldn’t even be the minimum time length needed to review the SEO and ensure it is SEO-friendly before going live. The estimated time frame for a new website to be built at a reputable level is approximately four months or longer.

If You Make The Site Look Nice It Will Rank Naturally:	BUSTED
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Unfortunately, this is not the case. Positions 1-3 are about showing Google you have a better user experience than those above and below you. Pages 2-10 are about getting Google to show you to users through a more clinical ticking of boxes. Flash websites can be among some of the most visually stunning websites you will ever look at, but if Google can’t read it, it won’t rank it.

The highlight of working in SEO is seeing people thrive under a good campaign. We share mutual goals of getting more results. At SponsoredLinX, we’re expert Mythbusters that drive the best and most relevant traffic straight to your site. We take pride in our efforts to help businesses flourish and love helping our clients through each stage of their campaign.



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TECH TRENDS TO SHAPE 2018

Here's what will dictate digital marketing next year!

By Kyle Connolly

It may feel redundant to say it, but I'll say it anyway—tech is changing.

Rapid advances in technology have revolutionised each facet of our lives, including content marketing. From initial creation to distribution to final consumption, new tech forces brands to rethink how we use content. In 2008, we weren't glued to smartphones and most of us read the news in the newspaper. Now, smartphones run our businesses, keep us in the know, and they entertain us. Technology is the focal point of our every day, and our job as marketers is to stay with the latest advances, identify how they affect content marketing, and adjust to suit.

So, let's examine what tech will be shaking up content marketing in 2018.

*If you happen to be reading this in 2028, feel free to LOL at how basic we were.

AI Will Create And Enhance Content

Content creators are already tuning the potential of AI to transform their work, and the technology will come to the fore next year. AI tools like natural language processing, predictive analytics, and generation algorithms create faster, smarter and more effective content.

Already, publishers like the Associated Press are making use of machine-generated content to increase volume and the speed in which information is released. Within the next few years, many experts predict machines will produce half of the content we see and read, with humans managing and overseeing.

Don't worry though humans, the robot revolution isn't upon us just yet. For now, features like data analytics, chatbots, and personalised recommendation systems will automatically direct audiences to content that they'll find relevant. This creates a more personal and dynamic user experience.

Mobile Optimisation Will Be The Norm

We just don't use desktops like we used to. In fact, if you are indeed reading this in 2028 you may be asking what a desktop even is. Everything is on the go and on demand, which is why the vast majority of digital media engagement happens on mobile devices. While it's not necessary to build your own apps, your content has to be optimised for mobile. Mobile only internet usage continues to rise globally and to grow and sustain your reach in 2018, mobile friendly content is no longer a recommendation- it's a requirement.

Back To Life, Back To (Virtual) Reality

The promise of the virtual reality revolution may seem a bit tired, but the truth is the tech has been waiting for the market to catch up and not the other way around. Experts predict that VR and AR (augmented reality) will generate upwards of \$150 billion by 2020, and widespread availability and accessibility will generate new ways for marketers to produce content.

For many brands, AR and VR present unexplored territory, and you may be feeling uneasy about going all in on these technologies just yet. And that's fine, always walk before you run.

Just view this trend as a reminder to improve your visual offerings. Creating interactive graphics, videos, and apps not only make for a more engaging strategy, it also lays the groundwork for future ventures into the virtual world.

Mastercard And Swarovski Launch Virtual Reality Shopping Experience



Image Source: www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=30&v=uFNFU4wgyNI

Stayin' A(live video)

We all had front row seats in 2017 to the introduction of live streaming features to all major social media platforms. While traditional social posts still have a role to play, you'd be remiss to ignore the power of live video. Now, many people state they actually prefer live broadcasting on their social pages.

These features allow you to convey your message to your audience in a more resonant and immediate way. Additionally, audiences are increasingly expecting live streaming for B2B brands in the shape of things like webinars. People expect a human connection to the pages they follow, and live video provides a fantastic opportunity to curate close customer relationships. The real time nature of a live video encourages engagement, no matter how big or small the audience size.

Image Source: www.blog.bufferapp.com/facebook-live-video

Content Personalisation Becomes A Reality

The steady march towards content personalisation has been underway for years, but advanced tech will take it to the next level. Precision analytics means tracking your audience profiles, establishing your buyer personas, and creating personalised content and recommendations.

Both Amazon and Google have already proven the value of personal experiences via hyper sensitive customer profiles, and tech will soon make it cheaper and thus more mainstream for brands of all sizes. By the end of 2018, your business needs to have invested in personalisation if you're hoping to thrive online.



Don't Just Share, Publish!

Content distribution relies on many tactics—social shares being the most common. However, this year platforms like Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook have made the move to being publishers in their own right, rather than platforms for link sharing. The thinking being “Why would people leave their social apps when they can get all their content in one place?”

Facebook still reigns supreme as the most used social platform for small businesses, and publishers have made use of Instant Articles to extend their reach. Both Instagram and Snapchat now include features that give the user the ability to read articles with just a swipe.

The days of social media tools as link hosts are not over yet, but these platforms do offer a solution to the organic reach competition. Social channels give you a way to get in front of audiences and drive them back towards your site, just as guest posting content to the right publication does. But in the 2018 social age, having engaging brand social channels is just as important as having a top notch site.

As technology forces changes in content marketing, we will have to shift and adjust in ways we can't predict yet. By monitoring these trends and embracing the changes, content marketers can develop innovative strategies to shape audience experience, and position their brands as forerunners into this brand new world.

TAKING REIGN OF THE CHRISTMAS RUSH

Getting The Most from Your Website And SEO At Christmas



By Marco Cacciola

As December rapidly approaches, everybody will begin to prepare for the ensuing craziness that is Christmas. Depending on your industry this may bring a seasonal spike in business; whilst for others this may be a chance to take a well-earned break and catch your breath. Either way, your SEO campaign has been working throughout the year and now is the perfect time to plan how to take advantage of the increase in seasonal traffic. Likewise, if Christmas is not a busy period, the time leading into Christmas is an ideal opportunity to plan for your busy season or year ahead.

Here are some helpful tips you can implement for success in either situation.

HOW CAN I MAKE THE MOST OF THE SILLY SEASON?

Leading into Christmas can be an extremely busy time for many; trying to balance your personal life with work as well as gift buying and other Christmas planning. Making your potential customers' browsing experience easier

can contribute to your success. With electronic devices continuing to be a popular Christmas gift; combined with the public holidays and Boxing Day sales, increased traffic can continue for several days after Christmas.

YOUR KEYWORDS

Search traffic can dramatically increase around the holidays and your keywords are designed to perform for you all year round, whereas Christmas specific terms will only be relevant leading into the festive season. The benefit of this is that consumer search psychology won't typically change from the rest of the year. We can see this effect in the example below where traffic not only increased for the search term 'gift ideas' but also for 'rubbish removal'. This increase means that more people are looking for sites like yours and your SEO campaign can ensure you are in front of internet browsers to take advantage of this spike.

MOBILE FRIENDLY

If your website isn't already mobile friendly, making it so is helpful - not

only leading into the Christmas period but also for the rest of the year. This is highly relevant considering Google searches on mobile surpassed desktop searches in the third quarter of 2015 (Fast Company, 2015), a trend that has continued in the past couple of years.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

If you're running an online store make sure that your payment system is streamlined for your clients. Consider simplifying the process by adding PayPal; for sites with big ticket items zipPay or Afterpay are also great services.

UPDATE PRODUCTS, PICTURES AND DESCRIPTIONS

Make sure any special products you have for the Christmas period are uploaded and ready to go. It is also important to ensure existing products and pages have adequate descriptions as well as visuals to ensure the best experience for users.

CLEARLY LIST CHRISTMAS HOURS AND DELIVERY TIMES

As Christmas draws nearer, clearly listing holiday opening hours and delivery times is imperative. To ensure your customers will not be disappointed or frustrated by not being able to find this important information, you should start advertising around late October to early November. This includes in store, and online where you could increase your appearances in local search.

CHRISTMAS SPECIALS

Along with listing your Christmas hours and delivery timeframes, having special landing pages clearly available is also a great idea. Pages for things such as gift ideas, special offers or packages can be a great way to improve a potential customer's engagement with your site by appearing more relevant.

PLANNING FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

Many of the above tips can be very helpful at Christmas, with mobile responsiveness and payment options in particular continuing to be highly relevant throughout the rest of the

year. If Christmas is a quiet time for you, here are a few extra tips that may prove helpful for the year ahead.

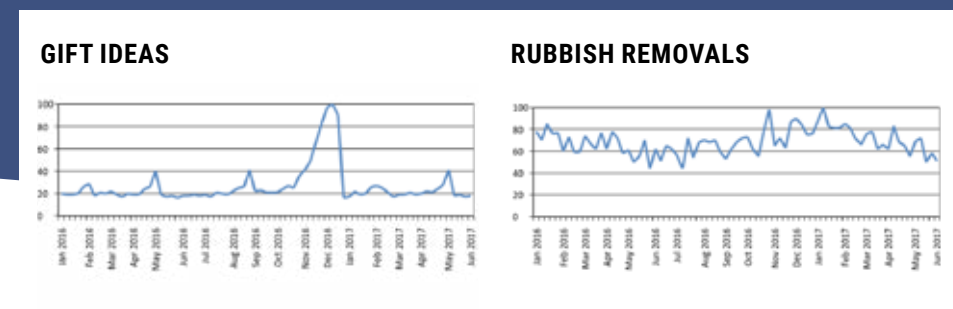
PLAN FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

Google doesn't take a holiday, and planning any major changes before Christmas and implementing them as your business winds down can be a great idea. This can ensure a smooth rollout and limited impact on your client's user experience, along with giving Google a chance to crawl your site to understand these changes before your business picks up again in the new year.

GIVE YOUR SITE A SPRING CLEAN

Take a chance to look over your website and clean up any pages with outdated information, remove old products, outdated content, and check for any pages or site elements that don't appear to be working. Don't forget that if you are doing this, you should check with your SEO Account Manager on the best practices to limit the impact on your site.

These are a few ideas that can benefit you leading up to the Christmas period; many of these being personalised to your website and product or service. If you want to make the most of this period, ask your SEO Account Manager for their opinion or recommendations and to ensure that any changes are SEO friendly.



UNWRAPPING HOLIDAY EMAIL MARKETING

How the holidays determine your marketing messages!

By Ben Bradshaw

It's October, and if you're a retailer, you should by now have a holiday marketing campaign ready to go.

You don't? Luckily, you still have time. Not much time mind you, but enough to get an effective email marketing campaign under way. Holiday shopping trends (unlike most trends) are usually quite similar. Thus, your email marketing isn't difficult to shape.

Our idea of 'Christmas Holidays' is pretty much in line with the mainstream, and with that, we can break down a month by month strategy for you to follow as the end of 2017 approaches!

OCTOBER

Start by getting ahead of the holidays. As retailers, be aware that a large assortment of people begin their shopping by October. There are still many brands who feel an October holiday message is too early, but as the old adage goes- "the early bird catches the sale". I'm pretty sure that's how it goes.

Emphasising the holidays in advance can ease shoppers in and keep your brand first in their minds. A good idea is to create a gift guide. As shoppers, we all want to avoid crowds and stress. A gift guide can create an easy shopping experience for the early bird, or at least provide ideas for those looking to purchase closer to the holidays. By promoting your campaign early, you begin customer attraction weeks beforehand, so when they're ready with cash in hand- your email is only a click away.

NOVEMBER

'Tis the season to get discounts!

Invite potential customers by offering 'November Exclusive' deals. By stating that certain products are on sale in November, and tagging with "Get your holiday shopping over and done with", you're adding a sense of both urgency and eventual relief upon purchase.

Take advantage of 'Black Friday' by promoting it weeks in advance, create a buzz towards the tail end of October and have your online store ready for massive traffic!

DECEMBER

It's your last chance!

Despite the massive numbers usually pulled in by Black Friday, most retail categories still do their best sales in December. According to the National Retail Federation, 90% of people were still holiday shopping in the last week before Christmas.

With 9/10 shoppers in panic mode, this is the perfect chance to land in someone's inbox with gift ideas, offers, discounts and fast, free shipping.

Don't forget post holiday either. At the end of December encourage subscribers to use those gift cards, purchase accessories or to get what they really need- "Disappointed with socks and chocolate again? Don't worry, spoil yourself here."

Q4 provides you with the best time of year for email marketing. Make use of data from previous years to improve campaigns and provide more conversions. By learning from what came before, you can 'unwrap' your potential and ensure a successful holiday season!



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MARKETING CHRISTMAS ADVENT

FT. THE BIGGEST DAYS FOR SHOPPING

Whether it's shopping online, in stores or on mobile devices, here's a window into the biggest dates this holiday season.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
26	27	28	29	30	01	02
03	04	<div>05 CHRISTMAS LIGHT looking searches</div>	06	07	<div>08 Searches for CHRISTMAS TREE ORNAMENT peaks</div>	09
10	<div>11 Searches for FASTEST DELIVERY peak</div>	12	13	14	<div>15 UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER Searches spike</div>	16
17	18	<div>19 Searches for STOCKING STUFFERS</div>	20	<div>21 Searches for GIFT IDEAS FOR DAD Peaks</div>	22	<div>23 Search for store OPENING TIMES</div>
<div>24 Search for CHRISTMAS PUDDING RECIPES surge</div>	<div>25 MERRY CHRISTMAS</div>	<div>26 BOXING DAY</div>	27	<div>28 Searches for NEW YEAR'S DIETS spike</div>	29	30
31	01	02	03	04	05	06



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