



2011 Holiday Tips for Social Media Advertisers

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INTRODUCTION

With the 2011 holiday shopping season fast approaching, it's time to start thinking about how you can best leverage social media to maximize your marketing performance. Kenshoo Social has compiled a handy list of tips & reminders to help you get the most out of social media and Facebook ads during the Holidays.

Below is a snapshot of the key dates to plan around during the peak season.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
NOV. 20	21	22	23	24 THANKSGIVING	25 BLACK FRIDAY	26
27	28 CYBER MONDAY	29	30	DEC. 1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 GREEN MONDAY	13	14	15	16 FREE SHIPPING	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE
25 CHRISTMAS	26	27	28	29	30	31
JAN. 1 NEW YEAR	2 POST NEW YEAR'S SALES ONLINE	3	4	5	6	7





Testing

Testing is critical in any online marketing campaign. However, the holiday shopping season is not a great time to be running lots of tests. Ideally, you want to get your testing wrapped up before the holiday push begins so that you can leverage your best tactics and assets when you'll (literally) get the most bang for your buck. Test early and then go with what you know.



Get Fans Now!

Don't wait to start accumulating fans. If you try to grow your fan-base during the holiday season, you may already be too late. The best sequence is to invest time in October & November acquiring fans so that, when the season really heats up (this year between Nov. 21 and Dec. 20), you'll have a solid group of fans who are primed to get your seasonal marketing messages and, hopefully, convert.



Engage Your Fans

Once you have the fans on board, you have to spend time interacting with them. Give them something valuable and fun! Start with more obvious ideas like deals and promotions and then consider expanding to more unique offerings like flash sales that last for a short duration. (1-3 hours is a good length that can generate some nice viral buzz). Consider marketing Gift Cards for that "hard to buy for" person. And don't forget to communicate your standard and express shipping cut-off dates. Deadlines are a very powerful motivator for procrastinators.

Be sure you keep your communication fun and light. It's important to mix up your posts between more retail-focused communication (like the ideas mentioned above) and more interactive messages with a light holiday theme. Remember that the holiday season can be stressful for some people so try to bring a little cheer to your posts.

You'll find that some posts are better than others at generating engagement with your fans. One term you're going to hear more and more in 2012 is "Story Triggers." This is a phrase that describes content designed to create engagement (which can then be turned into Sponsored Stories). Here are a few ideas for good Story Triggers:

- *Ask questions that will inspire your Fans to respond. What was your favorite gift? Least favorite gift? Favorite family memory? Funny holiday story?*
- *Try a poll: Are you planning to spend more or less on gifts this year vs last year? Do you buy gifts months in advance, during a sale, or procrastinate until the last minute?*
- *Create a virtual event that customers can RSVP to. This can be a good way to remind people about your shipping cut-off date, for example.*
- *Use a "fill in the blank" question to drive comments. "All I want for Christmas is _____."*

Remember to keep your posts short. Data has repeatedly shown that the longer a post is, the fewer likes & comments it gets.



Amplify Your UGC

Now that you have created some great triggers, it's time to amplify that new user-generated content with Facebook Sponsored Stories. Remember, with each Facebook fan having an average of 130 friends, you can really expand your reach quickly and effectively when you leverage the power of social context.



Be “Creatively” Prepared

Make sure you have lots of creative assets ready. Creative rotation can be an important part of maintaining steady traffic so be ready to switch out your images when you see ads begin to fatigue. A good best practice is to test the effect of different image attributes (background colors, frames, etc.) to see what drives the best CTR. Again, try to test your images before the Holiday season starts so that you're only investing in the strongest ads when conversion rates are high.



Targeting

To cast a wide net, you might consider opening up your targeting a bit. The tight, granular targets you've been testing and honing during the year might restrict your audience too much during holiday. Also keep in mind that the customers you're targeting most of the year (the actual buyers) may be flipped during holiday as gift givers are trying to find ideas for family members, spouses and friends. For example, if your customers tend to be female, you may want to actually target males who are on the lookout for gifts for wives & girlfriends. This is also a great time to run Facebook Marketplace ads targeted to friends of connections: if someone likes a brand, that may inspire a friend or relative to buy a gift for them from that brand.



Push Hard

Don't be afraid to push campaigns hard, especially in the early weeks of the holiday season. Remember that social media is a “top of funnel” channel so it should be used to generate broad awareness and buzz for your brand. Because top of funnel channels need time to help users move down the conversion path, it's good to push hard in November and early December to be sure you're staying top of mind before customers start buying. If you're also using Kenshoo Enterprise or Kenshoo Local for search, create an attribution model other than last touch to be sure that Facebook is given proper credit in the bidding algorithms for first and middle touches.



Budgeting & Reporting

Budgeting is one of the most difficult challenges during holiday season. Ideally, you should plan out your budget before the season starts at a granular level, eg daily. Use historical data to understand peak days of the week, trends, etc. Kenshoo's 2011 Holiday Calendar is a great tool for predicting user behavior during this peak sales period. It's also a good idea to use Kenshoo's Profile Objectives to monitor your burn rate through the season. Setting up Kenshoo's Scheduled Reports to email you a daily summary can be another handy way to stay on top of your progress & performance. Finally, the suite of Kenshoo Dashboard Reporting Widgets are perfect for getting quick snapshots of daily, hourly and trended performance.



After Shipping Cutoff

If you have brick and mortar stores, consider running geo-targeted campaigns after your shipping cut-off that will drive foot traffic into your retail locations. The days after December 25 can also be strong as some lucky gift recipients will be spending their holiday money before it burns a hole in their pocket.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



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