



# Holiday Ad Guide

***Presented by:  
Cidewalk***

*Tips, tricks, and tactics for making the most of your marketing efforts this holiday season.*

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# Introduction

**C**hristmas season is upon us! For many business owners, this *should* mean the most profitable season of the year. People are specifically looking to buy gifts for family, co-workers, pets, old friends, new friends . . . and maybe one or two for themselves.

However, a great deal of your success depends on your marketing efforts. Without a good marketing plan, your efforts may be for naught.

That's where this guide comes in – we'll cover a bevy of strategies you can use to make your marketing better, tools for creating your own marketing, and review the different platforms where you can promote your message.



# Workflow & Strategy

*“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”*

It can be very easy to create ads and place them everywhere. Whereas this is an effective strategy to get your name out there, it might not be the best strategy for you. The best marketing campaigns have a series of levers and funnels that persuade customers to take a desired series of actions . . . and end with a sale.

This requires careful planning and consideration. First, you have to lay out which platforms you wish to use (and accompanying budget). Then, decide which actions you want people to take in order for them to become customers.

For example, maybe you want to promote via Facebook in order to get them to a landing page, have them sign up for email and then complete the sale. Or perhaps you run a radio ad that leads them to your Pinterest board where you use Buyable pins. There are infinite possibilities – find which platforms / mediums work best for you (in terms of time, budget, and customer base) and create your workflow from there.

*The best marketing campaigns have a series of levers and funnels that persuade customers to take a desired series of actions.*

Remember that this should be an integrated campaign that plays off of your year-round marketing efforts.



### **Timing**

*When comes to creating a holiday campaign, timing is crucial. Make sure you adjust budgets / platforms accordingly.*

*For example, promote to build your email list for a week and then shift strategies to promote your website.*

### **Key Timing Considerations**

*Last Shipping Date – Make sure people know the last date they need to purchase by to ensure they get their gifts. Call out any special shipping options, such as “Next Day”.*

*Retargeting Ads – These focus on those that are likely to convert, but haven’t. Examples include empty carts, people who have searched for specific products, or normal dedicated customers who haven’t purchased during the holidays.*

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### **Specific Implementation Thoughts**

Various platforms all for different workflow implementations. Here are a few examples:

*Email* – First and foremost, create an automated email workflow. Have at least 4 prospect emails, 4 new customer emails, and 2 “empty cart” emails. Each of these should have it’s own goal – likely to either get people to visit your website or complete a purchase.

*Facebook* – Have people take certain actions with each post, whether that be visit your website, like a post, comment, or clicking on a custom tab. Also, take advantage of their scheduling feature to plan posts ahead of time.

*TV / Radio / Print / Mailings* – One benefit of having long lead times is that it allows you schedule far into the future. Create numerous ads that play into each other. One great example is using a countdown.

*Other Social Media* – Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Youtube . . . All of these offer unique features from live video streaming to featuring your blog posts. Find what works for you and try to stay on top of their new innovations.

# Wording & Image Choices

“Words can inspire. And words can destroy. Choose yours wisely.” ~ Robin Sharma

Your wording and image choices can make or break an ad. They both have to be appealing in order for the ad to work. When it comes to holiday wording, judge your audience to determine the appropriate usage. Also, remember that there is far more than just Santa; there are a myriad of holiday characters / phrases that you can choose to incorporate into your ads. Make a balance between iconic and creative.



*Balance the line between iconic and creative. This image gets conjures up the holidays in a very conservative manner.*

## Wording

During the holiday season, your customers are not only seeing more ads from you, but are also seeing more from other businesses. This means that your word choice is crucial to standing out from the clutter.

If you are running a promotion or contest, make sure to use words like ‘free’, ‘win’, ‘sale’, or ‘now’ – with caveat that if used in email, know that some of these may register as spam. (Hubspot has a great spam trigger word list [here](#)).

Other great word choices are those that remind people of the holiday season; words like ‘Christmas’, ‘holiday’, ‘shipping’, or ‘gift’ are effective.

Finally, don’t be afraid to play off common phrases. Between Christmas carols, TV specials, and general idioms, there are plenty to choose from.

## Images

Images used in your advertising campaigns shouldn't just be product images. Advertising images should make you feel something.

In order to get the best results, display your product as part of a lifestyle. If you can get people to think that using their product will make their lives easier, cheaper, better, then you have achieved your goal.

That's not to say that product images don't have their place. These are great for those that are close(r) to completing the sale. Showing off one more feature may be the final straw that convinces someone to purchase. Using these on social media or 'buy now' emails can be particularly effective.

Whether it comes to advertising or product images, make sure you are using good quality. Images should be appealing and garner attention; if they aren't, they can actually hurt your brand.



***Tight on budget? Here are some of our favorite resources for free images***

*Pixabay.com*

*Pexels.com*

*FreePublicDomain.net*

*Albumarium.com*

*And for design tools, we like:*

*Canva.com*

*Picmonkey.com*

*Buffer.com/Pablo#*

*Photopea.com*



## What About Video?

*Many social media outlets have started to optimize for video – that is, videos will be shown more than images or just text. Use this to your advantage by creating an additional video or slideshow – even if they're short. Short vignettes can sometimes be more effective than longer videos.*

SPOTLIGHT

# Events, Contests, & Sales

Creating buzz around the holidays is no easy task. Every other business is also ramping up their marketing efforts – meaning it can be difficult to cut through the clutter. One way to do so is by creating some kind of special – hosting an event, running a contest, or holding a sale.

Depending on the which you choose and how you execute, these can accomplish a wide variety of goals. It provides you with the opportunity to expand your customer base, showcase new products, or engage with the community. During your planning stage, make sure you identify a clear cut goal in mind and a way to measure that goal (building your email list, new customers, sales of a particular product, etc).



## Events

Events can come in many different forms. You could have an in-house 1 day event, set up a booth at a local festival, or even a completely digital one.

No matter your event, here are a few tips to help make it successful:

*Charity Tie-In:* The holidays seem to make people more charitable. Donate part of your proceeds to a charity.

*Landing Page:* Create a specific landing page and email invitation for your event.

*Pre, During, Post* – Make sure you market your event in all stages (especially through social media)

## Contests

Whether it's a contest (game of skill) or a sweepstakes (game of chance), there are a few key notes to take into consideration:

*Prizes:* Select a prize that is related to your company, a good enough offer to entice, and (preferably) is holiday related.

*Theming:* Short on time? Repurpose a contest you ran during the year and add a holiday theme to it.

*Be Creative:* Think outside the box. Customers are going to be inundated with contests. Come up with something unique that will make you stand out.



### **What If sales and discounts aren't my thing?**

There are a variety of reasons for why you may not want to offer a sale or discount (either over all or as part of an event / contest). It could be that it doesn't fit your brand. Or perhaps you are already running tight margins. Whatever the reason, there are still special things you can do to draw in customers:

- *Offer free gift wrapping* – Some people hate wrapping (and others just aren't good at it). This is an easy way to add additional value.
- *How-to guides / recipes* – Give people the gift of knowledge by teaching them how to make their holidays even better
- *Checklists* – With so much hustling and bustling during the holidays, checklists can be a handy tool.
- *Double punch rewards* – Do you already offer a loyalty program (buy 9, get the 10<sup>th</sup> free)? Offer to punch their card twice during the holidays.

### **Sales**

We're all familiar with sales – and there is no doubt that we have made a purchase or two because they were on sale. When running your own, here are some things to consider (and our recommendations):

#### **Percent off vs. Amount off**

We recommend following the 100 rule –

- If what you're selling costs less than \$100, offer a percentage off.
- If what you're selling costs more than \$100, offer a flat amount off.

In general, following this rule will make you appear more generous with your offer.

#### **Small(er) store wide discount vs. Large(r) discount on a particular item**

How many people do you always know exactly what to get them? Or is it more likely that you browse around and eventually have a eureka moment? Shoppers during the holiday season are looking for inspiration, as well as exact products. Offering a discount on a one or two items could seem limiting.

### **Short limited-time offers vs. Longer seasonal sales**

This will depend on how confident you are in getting the word out. In general, it is better to have a limited-time offer; this creates a sense of urgency among your customers. However, offering a limited time does you no good if no one learns about it. If you want to go all out with an offer and know you can reach the masses quickly, go with a limited time offer. If you think it'll take time to get people to learn about your offer (ex: perhaps you only want to do an in-store sale), then go with a longer sale.

# Social Media & Online

*“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”*

**D**igital marketing is so expansive – covering everything from email to social media to websites and beyond. There is a seemingly endless sea of possibilities . . . and an endless sea of ways you can spend your budget. When creating your digital strategy, select only a few platforms that will help you achieve your goal(s).

## Facebook

Facebook alone has nearly unlimited possibilities. Paid ads work best from a strategic standpoint and offer multiple benefits:

- *Audience:* Facebook’s target is truly fantastic. Start by choosing between true prospects, fans of your page, or retargeting. Know that you can also target by lifestyle and behavioral patterns.

- *Devices:* Facebook is one of the best platforms for driving mobile traffic; however, most people shop on their desktop. This means you either need a great mobile website or should only target desktop users.

*Once you’ve selected your platforms, make sure you optimize them to get the best results.* 

- *Goals:* There are a variety of goals that your ads can accomplish. Decide if you want to build your email list, drive website traffic, increase ‘likes’, or watch your video.



Optimizing your business page works best from a tactical standpoint:

- *Content*: Content can be extremely time consuming. Creating a schedule can help; but also don't forget that the goal is be engaging

- *Custom Tabs*: Create a custom tab that has an offer, video, or even a whole landing page on it. Note that in most cases, tabs will only be applicable to desktop.

- *Video*: Current Facebook algorithms are prioritizing video. If you don't think video works for you, definitely include images in all your posts (or multiple images with the carousel feature).

### Website

When it comes to your website, you need to make sure that it is both technically sound as well as marketing oriented. One misstep technically could frustrate a customer to the point of a lost sale. On the other hand, a website that doesn't have a natural flow can confuse customers to the point where they don't move to the final sales page.



*On the other hand, a website that doesn't have a natural flow can confuse customers*



### Helpful Companies For Digital Marketing

*Privy*: Widgets for your website that will collect email addresses

*ThunderPenny*: Creates custom Facebook tabs

*ButtonOptimizer*: Make custom call-to-action buttons



### To divide or not?

There are two trains of thought – put all of your budget into one medium or diversify into multiple

#### All In One

This allows you to put your budget into your most effective platform. Also, some platforms perform exponentially better based on budget. For example, it is more effect to pay for multiple TV commercials than just a singular one. Facebook, billboards, and radio also work this way.

#### Diversify

This lowers your risk by spreading out your budget. It can be time consuming to create different ads for each though (even Facebook, Pinterest, and Twitter all have different specs). However, this will give you broader coverage and can create better customer workflows

Take these steps to help your website:

- Create a logically and easy to follow flow

- Make sure all necessary information is prominent (don't forget to include last ship date).

- Pepper in key words that will increase google results. A great way to do this is through blog content.

#### Email

Email is essentially a two step process – get people to open your email and then get people to act on it.

- *Increase Your Open Rates:* The biggest thing you can to increase open rates is pay attention to your subject line. Shorter can be better so try to keep it under 50 characters. Specifically, you can try either asking a question, giving a command, or writing a compelling teaser. Above all, make sure you're unique. Your customers are going to be getting hundreds of emails this holiday season; create something that will stand out and compel them to read further. When in doubt, go for the eyebrow test – will this subject line make your reader raise their eyebrow? If yes, you're good!
- *Increase Your Click Through Rates:* The two things that affect CTR is the content and the offer. Make sure that each achieves the goal of your email (and a goal your readers will want). Also, have the link highly visible in multiple places, use great buttons, and don't make the email overly cluttered / complex.

Don't forget to make your emails mobile friendly. Approximately 50% (and sometimes as much as 70%) of your emails will be open via phone.

# Traditional Platforms

“Words can inspire. And words can destroy.  
Choose yours wisely.” ~ Robin Sharma

Traditional platforms – such as TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, and direct mailings – still hold a lot of value in today’s world. They can rely on years on proven results and are effective ways for people to learn about your company. Additionally, there is usually an account manager that can aide you in ad creation.

## TV / Radio

- *Pick your channels wisely:* Make sure the channels you pick are going to hit your target market. A smaller station that hits more of your clientele is better than a large one that reaches people outside your target market.

- *Remember the location:* Whereas digital ads can hit at any time, people usually see TV ads while at home in the evening and radio ads during their commute or while running errands.

- *Don't forget your CTA:* Include your address, phone number, and/or website. You put so much work into ad creation that can be easy to forget these.

## Integrate Traditional & Digital

- *Social Media* – Use traditional media to encourage people to visit your social media page. This will allow to further engage with them
- *Part 1 & 2*– Create a two part experience. Have the 1<sup>st</sup> available through one medium and the 2<sup>nd</sup> available online
- *Know the Roles* – Have different goals for each. Maybe traditional is your awareness piece and digital is the final sales push?

## Print

- *Use simple clear words:* Try not to use long or confusing words. Readers should understand your message quickly as they may only be flipping through the pages / mail.

- *Make it easy to read:* Design the layout to attract attention where you want it to go. This includes making sure the font size is large enough. A general rule of thumb is make your fonts at least one size larger than you think you need.

- *Include a coupon:* If you're going to go the print route, make sure you include a coupon. This will catch attention as it is a primary reason people still look at these ads.

# Mobile Marketing

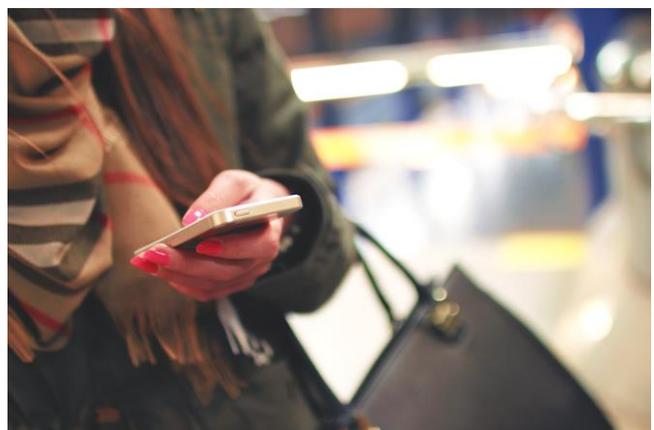
**W**hat if these solutions don't work for you? Or maybe you have tried them in the past. Or perhaps you just want to get that leg up on your competitor?

If that's the case, then mobile marketing (advertising on smartphone apps) may be for you. The primary benefit of mobile marketing is the ability to target based on location. It's the equivalent of having a billboard that can be seen throughout the entire town. The drawback is the lack of other targeting available. If you have a niche product (say to new parents), you won't be able to exclusively market to them – you'll be able to market to them and the rest of the town population. That being said, that type of targeting can lead to more references and word of mouth advertising.

Cidewalk is a great platform to dive into this sector. In 5 minutes, you can have your promotion up and running. Your ad will start displaying right away on the top 1000+ smartphone apps. Moreover, Cidewalk allows you to schedule future ads, change your ad as many times you desire, and directly connects you to customers via email lead generation.

## 4 Steps to Mobile Marketing

1. Visit <https://www.cidewalk.com> and click Free Trial
2. Select your target location (your hometown or a neighboring larger city)
3. Input your wording. We recommend your business name and slogan. Also, make sure you upload a logo.
4. Enter your payment information (for after the free trial) and click launch.



Cidewalk's parent company, Chitika Inc. has handled advertising inventory on behalf of Fortune 500 companies since 2004. Chitika understands how local, mobile targeting can be a tremendous asset for effectively reaching today's consumers. Cidewalk connects small businesses to local customers using strategically placed mobile ads on some of the world's most popular mobile apps.

#### By Using Cidewalk, You Get

- Large-Scale Exposure - Each advertisement you place will receive hundreds to thousands of views daily.
- Local Targeting - Choose your hometown in order to reach only those in close proximity to your business
- Advanced Marketing - Mobile marketing is more modern, more unique, and provides more benefits than traditional forms of advertising.
- Cost-Effective Ads - We are purposely priced to fit into the budget of any typical small business.

# CIDEWALK