

# 20 Mobile Tips for Holiday Marketing Success

As technology has evolved, the number of ways shoppers interact with businesses via mobile has increased rapidly. Mobile apps, SMS, mobile email and mobile Web browsing provide a wealth of opportunities for on-the-go consumers to research and buy, with the average customer checking his or her smartphone 150 times per day.<sup>1</sup>

Last holiday season, more website traffic was generated from mobile devices than desktop, a first since IBM began tracking these figures more than five years ago.<sup>2</sup> However, while engagement on these devices is on the rise, studies suggest that marketers are missing critical opportunities to improve the mobile shopping experience.

For starters, U.S. holiday conversion rates are nearly 3X greater on desktop computers than smartphones<sup>3</sup>, while a recent study indicates that only one-third of UK Internet users buy gifts via mobile.<sup>4</sup> Another survey revealed that just 40 percent of retailers are providing the integrated online and offline shopping experience customers anticipate.<sup>5</sup>

With mobile being a relatively new and evolving area, it's a challenge for marketers to take full advantage of the opportunities available to connect with holiday shoppers. To better engage these busy customers and increase conversions, here are 20 mobile tips for holiday success, organized by stage in the customer journey.

## Discover

### 1 Explore one new technology and test with it.

It seems like every week a new disruptive technology emerges. Holidays are excellent times to explore these technologies and see if they can be useful for engaging with your customers. Rather than finding ways to combat these disrupters, embrace them. Dedicate a small budget to researching market demand and testing across whatever areas makes sense for your business — iBeacons, location-based content, weather-triggered offers, wearables data, mobile cognitive analysis and much more.



## 2 Create a true value exchange for consumers.

If mobile channels are important to your business (and they should be), make real investments showcasing value. For example, when onboarding new mobile users, offer something valuable in return for their app download or SMS subscription. Since the users are new and you don't know much about them yet, pick offers with a wide appeal such as free shipping codes for all mobile holiday purchases.



**“Building a Mobile Experience That Offers Value and Drives Engagement”**

## 3 Use channels with greater reach to drive mobile engagement.

It's always a good idea to use channels that have a larger audience to promote smaller ones. For example, you might send an SMS with an app store direct download link or a mobile email encouraging users to sign up for SMS alerts.

When promoting new channels, always define their unique values to the user – why should customers also subscribe to this channel? How is it different from the channels they already subscribe to? Later, as customers progress through their buying journey, make sure you're doing more with these mobile channels than just regurgitating content and offers available elsewhere.

## 4 Use email to drive increased usage based on a user's app activity.

Mobile apps can be a huge tool for driving holiday engagement and revenue – but only if customers interact with them. To help ensure this, use email to drive increased usage based on a user's app activity. Create follow-up programs, similar to an email reactivation or win-back program, for email subscribers who:

- Click a link to download your app but don't download it
- Download, but don't activate or show any activity within a certain number of days
- Infrequently use the app or don't use key features that increase value and stickiness
- Have used the app regularly, but then show a pattern of declining to no engagement

## 5 Think outside the app with mobile email.

Mobile isn't all about its unique execution channels. Some customers won't have your mobile app or subscribe to your SMS list. What's likely, however, is that they'll open your holiday emails on a mobile device. Make sure all your email campaigns are optimized for mobile or, at the very least, responsive to smaller screen sizes.

Don't forget to optimize the webpage to which customer clicks through. Few things will make your mobile customers abandon faster than a mobile email linking to a non-mobile-optimized web page.

Learn

**6 Remember your mobile (and personal) tone.**

Mobile is deeply personal. So, take the time to consider your mobile brand persona and how you'll engage with your customers. What tone will you use? Are your customers excited to shop for the holidays, or are they just trying to get it over with? Be sure to answer these questions when developing your mobile voice. Technology can also help to personalize – use the customer's name, order info and more in messages and within your app.

**7 Provide location-based store hours notifications.**

Do you have special store hours for the holidays? Make sure your local shoppers know about them! Send mobile messages to customers based on their location using geo-targeting, location segments or even ZIP codes. Use dynamic fields to include the store location's name and special hours of business.

**8 Use rich notifications for seasonal branding.**

Rich notifications for mobile apps provide an excellent way to incorporate holiday branding into your messages. Push notifications are often used to deep-link to rich notifications with offer details, images, and even video. Bonus tip: Use rich notifications as scannable coupons for in-store redemption and house them in the user's app inbox.

**9 Promote alternative payment options early in the season.**

To help reduce friction in the mobile buying process, send a communication early in the holiday season that promotes payment alternatives, such as PayPal or Visa Checkout, that eliminate the need for hurried shoppers to enter their full credit card information. To further reduce mobile cart abandonment, make sure these options are prominently displayed within your online checkout process.



**“Tips for Using Payment Alternatives to Reduce Mobile Friction”**

**10 Use a preference center to let users manage notifications.**

Some customers may not be interested in receiving the above-average volume of holiday messages many retailers send, so provide tools they can use to control this frequency. For app messages, consider offering an in-app preference center where users can personalize the types of messages they receive. For example, they may not want seasonal offers but still wish to receive shipping notifications.

For SMS and email, offer similar frequency controls and make sure your preference center is mobile-friendly.

Buy

**11** Create a daily special promotion series.

Got an awesome holiday promotion in mind? That's great, but so do all your competitors. One way to stand out is to design a series of promotions with something for everyone. Each day of the series, you can offer a flash sale and notify customers with a message of the items for sale and the amount of time they have to purchase. Rich app notifications or mobile websites can inform customers of the next item coming up and the last item they missed.

**12** Communicate deadlines via mobile channels.

Use SMS and mobile push notifications to make customers aware of shipping deadlines around holidays. For example, if the last day you can guarantee Dec. 24 delivery is Dec. 21 at 11 a.m., make sure your customers know! Since these mediums are generally more interruptive than email, you may want to limit these notifications to one or two key notices, and then supplement within your email messaging stream and on your website.

**13** Make the Black Friday shopping experience easier.

Ever think how great it would be to get all your Black Friday shopping done from the comfort of your own couch? Many of your customers are probably thinking the same thing. Offering an easy way to take advantage of your Black Friday offers through mobile app or website purchases reminds customers of why the channel is valuable and keeps them engaged. You're also lightening the load for a potentially stressful weekend of shopping.

For those customers who brave the masses and venture out to your physical store locations, consider sending personalized push notifications, triggered by an iBeacon or geofence when they enter the store, that provide in-store shopping guidance based on the individual's past purchases or items in that person's online shopping cart.

**14** Provide an "email my cart" option for busy shoppers.

Mobile shoppers are frequently pressed for time and prone to distraction. So, give them the option to have their shopping carts emailed to them so they can purchase when the time is right. Since you're providing customers with a service that they requested, you'll likely see even stronger engagement than you would through traditional cart abandonment efforts.



**"Email My Cart: How It Can Help You Increase Conversions"**

**15** Deliver last-minute holiday gift ideas.

Just about everyone has been there – the day before the holiday party or family celebration, you remember that you forgot that coworker that helped you on that project, or that distant uncle. Your customers are there too! With smartphones typically within arm's length of most consumers, try using mobile channels to send a timely app push notification or SMS reminding customers that they can send last-minute gifts like "day of" gift cards. Enable shoppers to complete the mobile gift-giving experience through your app or mobile website.

Advocate

**16** Plan where mobile fits into the customer holiday journey.

Customers interact with a single brand, regardless of the channel they're on. It makes sense, then, that making sure mobile isn't operating in a silo will help improve the customer experience. When planning holiday campaigns, build journey maps and decide where mobile best fits in. Could a strategically delivered push notification or SMS drive more engagement than your current tactics?

Remember – mobile isn't always about when a customer is "out and about." Sometimes it's just the most convenient device at home or at work. By tapping the power of mobile to enhance the customer journey from first touch to post-purchase, you'll likely drive more loyalty and holiday revenue.

**17** Connect your mobile channels to everything else.

There are fewer things more annoying than being over-messaged, and given that most retailers increase communication cadence during the holidays, you want to be smart about your frequency approach to avoid drastically increasing opt-outs and complaints.

To that end, make sure your marketing system is integrated so it "knows" how your email, SMS and app platforms are communicating and can be adjusted to avoid bombarding your customers with too many messages. Don't ignore this one – a clever campaign can be overshadowed by disjointed execution!

**18** Make your mobile offers sharable.

If you have an inventive holiday campaign, let customers easily share your messages with their social networks. Add a share button to your mobile offer landing pages or rich notifications so others can take advantage of it too. Consider creating a compound promotion in which the more shares one offer code gets, the more of a discount your customer receives.

**19** Take shipping notifications up a notch.

Tracking packages during the holidays can be a hassle. So, offer an easy way for customers to be notified of when packages have been shipped, are in transit and arrive. For SMS, consider building a shipping status landing page that imports data from a delivery service. For push notifications, use rich notifications to show a map of where a package is at the time of update.

**20** Offer a mobile-first return process.

One of the biggest pain points of online shopping is returns. If the gift or the size of that outfit isn't quite right, there's usually a frustrating, multi-step process to return something. Need to tape up that box? Packing tape isn't always in the kitchen drawer. Print that shipping label? Printers aren't the essential household item they used to be. Make sure your return labels are already adhesive, include return packing tape, and if your customers need to schedule a pickup, let them do it from your mobile website or app.



**“Building a Mobile Experience That Offers Value and Drives Engagement”**

Strategically incorporating some of these mobile tips will help you better engage holiday shoppers, but don't stop there. Based on your unique business and customer base, consider other mobile tools you might leverage, and then fine-tune your tactics based on your results. Continue to shift your mobile approach to match your customers' evolving shopping preferences, and you'll help ensure a happy holiday season for your business and customers alike.

## Footnotes

1-IBM, "[Consumers Set the Rules of Engagement](#)," 2016

2-IBM, "[U.S. Retail Online Holiday Shopping Recap Report](#)," Jan. '16

3-IBM, "[U.S. Retail Online Holiday Shopping Recap Report](#)," Jan. '16

4-eMarketer, "[Most UK Internet Users Not Buying Gifts via Mobile](#)," July '16

5-IBM, "[IBM 2016 Global Customer Experience Index](#)," 2016

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## About IBM Marketing Cloud

IBM Marketing Cloud, part of the IBM Marketing Solutions portfolio, powers the delivery of exceptional experiences for customers across the buyer journey by leveraging customer data and behaviors, providing analytical insights and automating relevant cross-channel interactions. The cloud-based digital marketing platform provides email marketing, lead management and mobile engagement functionality to inform and drive personalized interactions in real time. To find out more, please contact us at 1-866-745-8767 or +44 20 7202 5930 and visit [ibmmarketingcloud.com/contact](http://ibmmarketingcloud.com/contact).

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