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How To Take Advantage of the Holiday Slow Down

By Jeff Mulligan

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Unless you are selling gifts or other Christmas-related items, December can be a deadly slow time of the year. Marketing-related sales can fall off by 50% or more. On the other hand, January often kicks off with a roar as thousands of new customers enter the marketplace thanks to well-meaning New Year's Resolutions that involve working from home and making more money.

So what can you do about it? Here are some ideas.

1. Work on your site.

If you've got a To Do list, now is the time to attack it with a vengeance. Fix those graphics. Rewrite that sales letter. Add those new products for which you purchased resell rights. Get your infrastructure ready for new customers.

2. Test

Now is also a great time to test new ideas. Create a new sales page and see how it pulls vs your old page. While it may take a bit longer to get a statistically significant sample, at least you will know what works better when hot-selling January rolls around.

3. Build your autoresponders

If you don't have an email list you are continually promoting to, now is the time to start one. You can't find a guru that doesn't agree that the list IS your business. So how do you start? There are gigabytes worth of products, eBooks and advice on eZines out there. Jimmy D. Brown's Ezine Profit Producer is one of the most respected (<http://www.cbmall.com/pvm/epp.asp>)

4. Strengthen your Affiliate Program

If you have an affiliate program, now is the time to make it better. What have you offered your affiliates lately? Create some new banners. Write an article or ad they can use. Give them some new promotional ideas that seem to be working for you.

This idea worked great for me. I created an upgrade program that included significant new benefits. Not only did it increase the commissions earned by my own affiliates, but many of them took advantage of the upgrade as well, increasing my sales. (Make any offer like this attractive to your affiliates, mine only paid 50% of what others would pay.) Every product should have an upsell option – does yours? If not, create one!

5. Join new affiliate programs

This is a great time to research new affiliate programs that can add multiple income streams to your web portfolio. Look for programs that fit well with your target niche, offer significant ongoing income potential, and provide excellent customer support.

Another tip: Carefully analyze how much work program demands. Can you make enough extra money to justify the additional work required on your part? Remember, your time is the most valuable asset you have.

Summary

While this may be a slow season for sales, December offers great opportunities for webmasters to improve the performance, effectiveness and income potential of their internet business. Take advantage of this time by working on the things you can leverage when January sales take off.

4 Strategies For Seasonal Selling – Planning For Retail Cycles

By Chris Malta & Robin Cowie

Every product has a natural life cycle and a season where it sells best: some early buyers come at the beginning, and then the mass of buyers come. Prices peak and retailers begin running out of stock. Sales slow, and trickle down to a few last-minute shoppers.

As an online seller, it's critical you prepare for the natural retail cycles throughout the year. With some simple strategies, you can make the most of the opportunities presented by the changing seasons:

1. Keep the Flow Going The way to maintain sales volume is to be ready for the next selling season. Phase in your new seasonal items for early shoppers while your other product line sales are winding down. You can keep the momentum going in your store and your income if you plan accordingly.

2. Make Advance Preparations Don't wait until the holiday is upon you to get your products lined up

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and ready to go. You should begin pushing your promotions two to three months ahead of time, according to Lisa Suttora of

. Says Suttora, "The advantage to having your

products ready several months before a holiday season is you capture the early bird buyers... You'd be amazed how many people shop months in advance of a holiday."

Another benefit of early marketing is it provides lead time for the search engines to pick up the pages for your holiday specials. Include the season or holiday name in your titles, because people are searching for those terms.

3. Use What You've Got You don't necessarily have to change your entire product line every season. Evaluate your current product line and see what can be promoted as a seasonal item. Use your imagination—create unique gift baskets and kits. Shoppers are pressed for time and are looking for solutions, so put together product bundles to solve their holiday needs.

4. Adjust Your Website Your web store should reflect the season—feature items that work well for the approaching holiday. Put a seasonal spin on your ads and listings. "Your sales don't have to drop," advises Suttora. "Evaluate what you're selling and how you want to position it—freshen up the look of your site. You've got a whole new group of buyers coming in [with each new season], so you want to be ready for them."

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more FREE eBiz info from Entrepreneur Magazine Radio!



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