

Is Your Internet Business Ready for Holiday Shoppers?

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**Is Your Internet Business Ready for Holiday Shoppers?**

**By Angela Wu**

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Okay, I confess: I can be a terrible procrastinator when it comes to shopping for the holidays. I don't much like fighting my way through crowded shopping malls. So, instead, I'm ready – even willing – to surf the web looking for the perfect gift.

And I'm not the only one. According to one article from Internet.com, experienced web buyers found online shopping more satisfactory than traditional 'brick-and-mortar' stores or catalog shopping.\*\*

It seems that Internet shopping is poised to become bigger each year. By preparing your online business for the throng of holiday shoppers, you too can pick up additional sales, both from new customers and from repeat business. Here are a few tips to help your business make the most of the holiday season ...

== Offer discounts and specials – free shipping, bonus gifts, whatever's appropriate for your business. Display these offers prominently on your website and make sure the ordering process is simple and obvious.

== Use your customer list! Email a special offer directly to previous customers and newsletter subscribers. They already know you and conversion rates are much higher than for first-time visitors.

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== Redo your pay-per-click campaigns. Provided that your bids will still give you a reasonable return, bid on select holiday or gift-related key phrases to boost your visibility to holiday shoppers. Read the article, "How to Instantly Boost Traffic and Sales for Just Pennies!" for more on pay-per-click search engines. <http://onlinebusinessbasics.com/articles/payperclick.html>

== Encourage referrals. Put up a 'Tell a friend' button or script on your site so that visitors can let their friends know about your great holiday offer. Or offer a coupon and invite the customer to 'share' it with a friend. More on encouraging referral business is

available in the article, "Building a Referral-Friendly Business":

<http://onlinebusinessbasics.com/articles/referrals.html>

== Send out a holiday-related press release. For instance, people love to hear heartwarming stories and acts of charity, particularly during the holiday season.

== Write holiday articles or stories that relate to your product or service. Distribute the article and encourage others to pass it on. At the end of the article, leave a small link or blurb about your business and the current holiday specials.

Sometimes all it takes is a few minutes' work to grab the attention of eager holiday shoppers! Have a safe, happy, and prosperous holiday season.

Angela is the editor of Online Business Basics, an exclusive newsletter for eBusiness beginners. Every issue is packed with helpful tips and useful tools, specially selected to fit a beginner's shoestring budget. Visit her online today at <http://onlinebusinessbasics.com/article.html> OR <mailto:businessbasics@workyourleads.com> for a series of 10 free reports on building a business on the web.

### **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.

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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 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."

Chris Malta and Robin Cowie of WorldwideBrands.com are the Writers and Hosts of The Entrepreneur Magazine EBiz and Product Sourcing Radio Shows.

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more FREE eBiz info from Entrepreneur Magazine Radio!

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