

A stylized illustration of a river with two kayakers. The river is depicted with light blue and white wavy lines on a dark green background. Two kayakers are visible: one in the upper right and one in the lower left. They are wearing red and yellow gear. The overall style is modern and graphic.

**ORACLE**  
Marketing Consulting

Second Quarter | 2023

# Holiday Marketing Quarterly

Your quarter-by-quarter checklist for success

The holiday season doesn't have an off-season. Having a successful holiday season means executing a successful year-round strategy. Oracle's Holiday Marketing Quarterly gives B2C brands a quarter-by-quarter plan for how to achieve more during the critical holiday season with their email marketing and other digital marketing channels.

Our second quarter checklist is focused on finishing your review of the 2022 holiday season and then making a range of improvements to everything from subscriber acquisition to performance reporting to campaign production. In this Holiday Marketing Quarterly, we'll cover:

- + [Holiday Messaging Competitive Intelligence](#)
- + [Audience Acquisition Source Optimization](#)
- + [Unsubscribe Process Optimization](#)
- + [Improving Analytics & Reporting](#)
- + [Experimentation & Testing](#)
- + [Accelerating Campaign Build Processes](#)

Our goal is to always be thinking at least 3 months out with our clients so they can avoid stalling out. We hope this quarterly checklist helps you stay on track with your planning so you achieve your goals. And, of course, if you'd like assistance, we're always here to help. Just talk to your Oracle account representative, [visit us online](#), or [drop us a line](#).



**Clint Kaiser**

Head of Analytic & Strategic Services,  
[Oracle Marketing Consulting](#)



# Holiday Messaging Competitive Intelligence

In our [first quarter Holiday Marketing Quarterly](#), we encouraged you to do a holiday post-mortem to uncover the areas where you underperformed and outperformed. Now that you've looked inward, let's next look outward at what your competitors did.

- ☐ **Competitive tracking:** Look back at how your competitors used their email, SMS, and other digital marketing channels during the holiday season. Hopefully members of your marketing team have signed up to receive your competitors' promotions, so you can assemble key data points. But even if you did, we recommend using a service like [SparkPost Competitive Tracker](#), which not only aggregates email campaigns, but also provides some performance data. Consider pulling together the following information:
    - ☐ *Number of campaigns*, keeping in mind that this should vary by subscriber and customer segment
    - ☐ *Send volume and projected reach*, keeping in mind that many brands loosen their audience targeting criteria during the holidays, sometimes inviting deliverability problems and the negative impact those have on sales
    - ☐ *Open rate*, noting when engagement is highest and lowest, as well as any patterns in engagement—while also keeping in mind that email service providers are reporting open rates differently in the wake of [Mail Privacy Protection](#)
    - ☐ *Sends per day*, including the most active send days and how they map to key days like Thanksgiving, Black Friday, Cyber Monday, Green Monday, and Super Saturday, recognizing that the attention on marque selling days has been spread out to the surrounding days over the past three holiday seasons, as discussed in our [2022 Email Marketing Holiday Season in Review webinar](#)
  - ☐ *Most active send times*, which you can use to inform your send times, especially if you don't use [send time optimization](#) or it's not appropriate for a particular send
  - ☐ *Inbox placement*, paying attention to how volume, sends per day, open rates, and other [factors affected deliverability](#)
  - ☐ *Subscriber/audience overlap across competitive brands*, so you understand the competitive landscape and how a competitor's messaging might impact your company's
  - ☐ *Promotions and messaging themes*, so you can get inspired and understand how competitive your offers are
  - ☐ [Commonly used words in subject lines](#) to inspire your subject line [A/B testing](#), as well as the effectiveness of those words and phrases, which the Subject Line Advisor portion of SparkPost's Competitive Tracker shares
- "Wayback Machine and similar services can also show you what competitors' homepages looked like on specific days, so you can see how the messaging there compares to the messaging in their emails."*



**Chris Wilson**  
Strategic Director of Strategic Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

*“Competitive intelligence provides valuable insights for brands to better understand relative measures, timing, cadence, and key performance outliers during the critical holiday season. Collectively, these insights present opportunities for segmentation and personalization optimizations or program expansion ideas that can be experimented and tested during the summer and into the fall to ensure holiday success.”*



**JT Capps**

Strategic Director of Analytic & Strategic Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

- ☐ **Competitive intelligence into action:** Take what you’ve learned from your [holiday post-mortem](#) and combine it with your competitive tracking and then compile a set of...
- ☐ Learnings that might inform your holiday planning, message cadence, cross-channel coordination, etc.
- ☐ Tactics and strategies you want to test during the upcoming holiday season
- ☐ Campaign creatives, subject lines, and other message content you might use to inspire your messages this holiday season



### **Need help analyzing your competitors?**

Oracle Marketing Consulting can help your company review your competitors’ holiday campaign strategies for potential learnings that you can apply to your 2023 holiday strategy. Want to discuss your needs? Talk to your Oracle account representative, [visit us online](#), or [drop us a line](#).

# Audience Acquisition Source Optimization

Selecting the right people to become subscribers is a huge predeterminer of digital marketing success. Get highly interested and valuable customers to subscribe and you're golden. Get disinterested people who don't have an affinity for your brand and you're setting yourself up for hard times. Here's our checklist for how to strengthen your audience building:

☐ **Inventory your audience acquisition sources.**

Track down all the ways that people can sign up to receive your promotional email, SMS, and other digital marketing campaigns. Keeping in mind that you might have multiple sources in any category, check out our [Audience Acquisition Source Ideas checklist](#), which discusses 18 different types of acquisition sources across different risk levels, plus advice from our consultants on how to best optimize each of them.

*"Stay away from email appends, rentals, and purchased lists. These segments are characterized by a lack of response—very low open and low click rates. These lists frequently trigger dangerous spam trap hits along with higher bounces, unsubscribes, and complaints. That puts the sender's deliverability reputation at risk and often results in blocking at receiving ISPs."*



**Kevin Senne**

Sr. Director of Global Deliverability Operations,  
Oracle

☐ **Measure the effectiveness of each of your audience acquisition sources.** How are each of them performing in terms of the behavior of the audience generated by them? For example, for the email subscribers from each one, figure out the average open rate, click rate, conversion rate, spam complaint rate, unsubscribe rate, revenue generated, etc. You may find that one or more sources are so problematic that you decide to discontinue it. In particular, identify your audience acquisition source that generates...

*"The outcome of the audience acquisition source analysis should be socialized across internal demand generation teams to help maximize return-on-investment for paid media efforts and to inform look-alike model test strategies."*



**JT Capps**

Strategic Director of Analytic & Strategic Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

- ☐ The most valuable audience members
- ☐ The least valuable audience members
- ☐ The most engaged audience members
- ☐ The least engaged audience members
- ☐ The audience members who opt out the most
- ☐ The audience members who opt out the least

*"We highly recommend that every email capture source is tagged with an identifier on the backend so you can determine how each is performing. Doing this will allow you to invest in high-value sources, as well as to shut down poorly performing sources."*



**Kaiti Gary**

Sr. Director of Analytic & Strategic Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting



*"Once a year, sign up for your own email program through your various email capture touchpoints. It's not uncommon to be surprised by what does or doesn't happen. I've had clients discover that welcomes aren't sent out, that old versions of welcome emails are sent, and that the delay in that first touch is days rather than the few minutes they were expecting."*



**Clint Kaiser**

Head of Analytic & Strategic Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

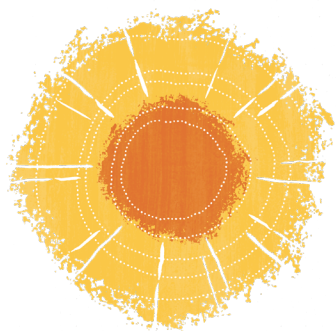
*"Most of us probably wouldn't meet someone new and tell them everything there is to know about ourselves all at once. But that's how brands act when they stuff everything into one welcome message. Our brains just aren't wired to process lots of new information at once—repetition and distribution are important. That's why welcome series are so much better than sending a single welcome."*



**Kelly Moran**

Senior Art Director for Copy,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

- ☐ **Audit and optimize your audience acquisition sources.** For the sources that you decide are working well enough to keep, look at each one and determine:
  - ☐ Is the opt-in form and related copy up to date?
  - ☐ Does the opt-in form work properly, recording the data collected accurately?
  - ☐ Are there **ways that you can optimize your opt-in forms** for each of these sources? For instance, are the benefits of signing up clear and is the form easy to complete?
  - ☐ If you collect preferences during your signup process, are the content, contact frequency, and delivery preference choices you offer up to date? Verify that those selections are being recorded properly and being acted on in your **welcome campaigns** and future messages.
  - ☐ For those acquisition sources where you deem it wise to use a **double opt-in process**, is it streamlined to maximize confirmation rates?
  - ☐ Are the **welcome messages** triggered by signups for each of your subscriber acquisition sources appropriate for each of those sources and drive the actions you need them to? Are you **making seasonal adjustments to your welcome campaigns**?



- **Audit your welcome campaigns.** Depending on the audience acquisition source, new prospects and customers come into your program with different levels of brand familiarity and different expectations. Consider crafting two or more different [welcome campaigns](#) so you can address those differences. Also, keep in mind that your welcomes are your first opportunity to acknowledge and act on any preferences they've expressed.

*"Sometimes brands want to change their welcome program because they're bored internally or think it's time for a refresh, but if it's still resonating with your subscribers, don't mess with it. If you have doubts, do some low-lift A/B testing to confirm. But make sure you're focusing your efforts on making updates that are going to move the needle."*



**Elizabeth Thomas**  
Senior Art Director for Creative Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

- **Consider launching new audience acquisition sources.** Now that you've evaluated and optimized your existing acquisition sources, consider introducing new ones. To get inspired, check out [our Audience Acquisition Source Ideas checklist](#). Perhaps you've never tried a lightbox or exit intent pop-up before? Offline sources are often overlooked—just make sure you're doing digital signups via tablets or confirming via [double opt-in](#) to protect yourself from high bounce rates and verbal transcription errors.

*"Plenty of brands have gotten burned trying to attract subscribers in their stores and restaurants. The problem was usually not the venue, which is packed with customers who know your brand—it was that email addresses were collected verbally or via paper forms. Scrap those error-prone collection methods in favor of digital methods."*



**Chad S. White**  
Head of Research,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting



### Looking to increase your list growth?

Oracle Marketing Consulting's List Growth & Demand Generation Services team can help you build up your digital marketing audience with engaged, high-value customers. Want to discuss your needs? Talk to your Oracle account representative, [visit us online](#), or [drop us a line](#).



# Unsubscribe Process Optimization

Opt-ins and opt-outs are opposite sides of the same coin. Both affect your email list health and list growth. For example, you can boost your list growth by **reducing your churn** by implementing a **preference center** and using other tactics. Here's how to make sure your unsubscribe process is working its hardest for you:

☐ **Audit and improve your unsubscribe process.**

Frustrating opt-out processes drive spam complaints, hurting your deliverability as well as your brand image. To reduce this risk, ask yourself:

- ☐ Is my email unsubscribe link easy to find and clearly identified by using "Unsubscribe" as the link text?
- ☐ Does my unsubscribe process involve no more than two clicks—one in the email and one on the unsubscribe page? If it takes more than two clicks, it's too complicated.
- ☐ Can I better understand why people are opting out by using an unsubscribe survey that appears on the opt-out confirmation page? To be the most helpful, you want to ask about issues you'll potentially act on.

- ☐ Can I use a **preference center** to offer subscribers alternatives to unsubscribing that address the pain points that are driving them to want to opt-out? For example, can they be given the option to change their email address, change topic preferences, change email frequency, or **snooze their subscription** for a little while?

*"We worked with a global retailer to change their unsubscribe page to mitigate opt-outs, which typically increase slightly during and right after the holidays. By adding the option to stay subscribed and to pause emails for 30 days, we found the average unsubscribe rate on holiday campaigns dropped 82%. The approach was so successful that we left it in place year-round."*



**Chris Wilson**

Strategic Director of Analytic & Strategic Services, Oracle Marketing Consulting





☐ **Audit and optimize your preference center.**

First, make sure your [preference center](#) is working properly and that you're acting on subscribers' selections, and then think about improvements. Ask yourself:

- ☐ Are all of the preference choices up-to-date?
- ☐ Are my subscribers' preferences being collected and stored accurately?
- ☐ What percentage of users have partially completed their profile or preferences? How can you encourage or incentivize those people to complete it?
- ☐ Am I acting on all of the preferences I'm collecting? If not, strongly consider changing that by either acting on them or not collecting them.

*"The goal of a preference center is to persuade a customer to continue receiving marketing messages—even if it's at a reduced frequency or via a lower-ROI channel—because any communication is better than no communication."*



**Peter Briggs**  
Director of Analytic & Strategic Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

- ☐ How are my current content, contact frequency, or delivery preferences affecting subscriber retention, customer engagement, and customer lifetime value?
- ☐ Are there other preference choices I can offer? Consider...
  - ☐ *Topics of interest*, whether it's preferred styles, shopping departments, gaming platforms, brands, destinations, or other subjects
  - ☐ *Communication frequency preferences*, which is often presented in terms of X emails per week or month, but sometimes is presented in terms of which content they want, such as "Send me only the best deals" or "Send me every deal"
  - ☐ *Additional channel opt-ins*, such as getting permission to send SMS messages or directing customers to your social media pages or your mobile app download
  - ☐ *Location preference*, such as favorite store, restaurant, venue, or airport location, since it's unwise to assume that their closest location is always a customer's preferred location, especially with [Mail Privacy Protection generalizing subscribers' locations](#)

**Want help retaining more subscribers?**

Oracle Marketing Consulting's Analytic & Strategic Services team can analyze your unsubscribe process and preference center to help you identify and roll out improvements that reduce email list churn and increase subscriber engagement. Want to discuss your needs? Talk to your Oracle account representative, [visit us online](#), or [drop us a line](#).

# Improving Analytics & Reporting

Every organization is **striving to be insight-driven**. But it's difficult—even dangerous—to do that when you don't have access to reliable, meaningful performance metrics. Here's our to-do list for how to improve your performance visibility:

- ☐ **De-silo your data.** **Manually exporting data and pooling it** so you can do analytics is a solid first step. But long-term, it's key to have a central repository like an **Oracle Unity Customer Data Platform**, where you have one version of the truth about your customers and prospects. With the silos broken down, you have much better visibility into customer behavior and trends across your engagement touchpoints.

*"Moving up to a data-driven approach entails centralizing your data from all channels and departments so you can ask WHY questions, not just WHAT questions."*



**Otilia Antipa**  
Principal Product Manager for Eloqua,  
Oracle

- ☐ **Centralizing your data governance.** **Centralizing your data isn't just a technological change.** It's an organizational change. Create accountability for your data's accuracy, privacy, and governance by naming a head of data. The exact title doesn't matter (we've seen a huge range of titles!), but having someone be responsible for your data management is key.

- ☐ **Build better performance dashboards and reports.** Get the deep, impactful data that you need to make wise strategic decisions. Here are some metrics that our clients are asking for:

- ☐ **Conversions.** Whether it's sales conversions or any other action you're asking your customers or subscribers to take, it's important to measure this bottom-of-the-funnel event.

*"After years of economic and business turmoil, brands are strained to do more than ever with less than usual. Leveraging deeper analytics data and more sophisticated modeling will allow marketers to better understand how channels behaviors and customer value are changing. This updated view will be key as companies decide how to evolve their strategies and programs to obtain the most value from their marketing efforts."*



**Bryan Moreci**  
Account Director,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

- ☐ **Velocity.** Is engagement with your digital marketing program accelerating or decelerating? This will naturally ebb and flow over time depending on where the customer is in their lifecycle. Acceleration implies the subscriber is likely in-market. Deceleration can mean they are exiting a buying phase or are disengaging with your brand.

- ☐ **Audience health.** Is your list growing or shrinking in terms of the number of subscribers and average time on list? How is your list churn trending? What percentage of your list has opened at least one of your emails in the past 30, 90, 180, and 365 days? Is your deliverability improving or declining? What are those various metrics when looked at across audience acquisition source or across inbox providers?

- ☐ **Return on investment.** Whether for a project, your email program, or your whole marketing program, knowing the return you're getting on your marketing investments allows you to make better decisions about where to invest next. It also allows channel owners to make stronger budget arguments.

- ☐ **Lifetime value.** In the age of customer-centricity, lifetime value is an increasingly important metric. If you're growing lifetime value, you're either getting customers to increase their rate of spending or keeping them engaged longer—or both. If it's falling, then customers are investing less money and time in your brand—a trend that you'll want to reverse.



☐ **Create better customer models for targeting.**

Using your analytics to better understand your audience and craft the best segmentation and contact frequency strategy can boost engagement, increase sales, and improve deliverability. Here are three models that we often use with our clients:

☐ *Subscriber engagement models.* Keeping your email engagement rates high is critical for good deliverability, especially at inbox providers like Gmail. To avoid trouble, you will want to suppress subscribers who haven't opened or clicked recently, and send fewer emails to those people prior to suppressing them. However, "recently" will vary for every business, depending on a variety of factors such as email frequency, engagement rates, and complaint rates. Moreover, **Apple's Mail Privacy Protection is forcing marketers to incorporate omnichannel metrics into their engagement modeling** to compensate for the loss of opens. Experimentation and careful monitoring are necessary to find the right cutoffs to protect your sender reputation.

☐ *RFM modeling.* Recency, frequency, and monetary (RFM) modeling allows businesses to understand relative customer value based on when their last purchase was, how often they make purchases, and the value of their purchases. It has been around for a long time, but now it's easier than ever to calculate and put into action. In fact, **Oracle Responsys offers native RFM modeling for targeting.**

☐ *Predictive activity modeling.* What are the chances that a particular subscriber will buy this product if we promote it in an email to them? Predictive activity modeling can answer that question across your entire subscriber database so you can target only those who are likely to convert.

*"With Mail Privacy Protection now fully impacting inactivity management and Spamhaus and other blocklists more active than ever, many large email senders are struggling to keep their active mailable audiences growing safely. If you need help, **reach out to us.**"*



**Daniel Deneweth**

Head of Email Deliverability Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

*"Models don't have to be laborious and complex to create. The hardest part oftentimes is thinking about which data inputs to include to ensure maximize effectiveness of the model. For example, one predictive model we regularly use includes the date of the last site abandon trigger as a data value input. Seems obvious, but it's often overlooked."*



**Clint Kaiser**

Head of Analytic & Strategic Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

☐ **Embrace design analytics.** If you're disappointed with the results of your analytics efforts, it may not be the execution. You might be asking analytics to solve the wrong problems. **Design analytics can help you properly identify root causes of problems,** so your analytics solutions work harder for you.

*"Once you get the hang of it, design analytics will help you come up with better solutions and avoid wasting time on misdirected projects that address symptoms and non-problems."*



**Kaiti Gary**

Sr. Director of Analytic & Strategic Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

**Want to improve your reporting?**

Oracle Marketing Consulting's Analytic & Strategic Services and Performance Reporting Services teams can help you with all of your dashboard and modeling needs, including predictive activity modeling. Want better audience insights and better visibility into how your digital marketing is truly performing? Talk to your Oracle account representative, **visit us online,** or **drop us a line.**

# Experimentation & Testing

The second and third quarters are a great time to experiment with different tactics and strategies in a lower-stakes environment. At the same time, selling seasons like Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day, Independence Day, back to school, and Labor Day offer opportunities to test seasonal messaging, designs, and tactics that can yield learnings for the holiday season.

- ☐ **Infuse AI into your email program.** Artificial intelligence and machine learning can help marketers identify trends in a sea of data that they otherwise wouldn't be able to see. Here are some AI implementations to consider:
  - ☐ *AI-powered content recommendations.* Ideal for companies with lots of product SKUs or content, AI can help you personalize your emails with product and content recommendations that are tailored to each individual subscriber. This is just one of [many AI and machine learning apps available to Oracle customers](#).
  - ☐ *Send time optimization.* Picking an email send time based on aggregate subscriber response is good, but picking send times based on individual subscriber responses is better. Learn more about [the best time to send emails](#).
  - ☐ *AI-powered email copywriting tools.* Traditionally, these tools have been focused on identifying the most effective words in your subject lines, calls-to-action, and other marketing copy. However, with the advent of ChatGPT, the conversation has focused almost entirely to time-savings. We've had [concerns about the effectiveness of legacy AI-copywriting tools](#), and we have concerns about the latest breed of generative text tools, too.
  - ☐ *Predictive activity modeling.* AI can help you choose better audiences for your sends, allowing you to reduce email frequency to those who are unlikely to respond and increase frequency to those who are likely to engage. Learn more about [achieving the best email frequency](#).

*"With Apple's Mail Privacy Protection obscuring opens for many subscribers, Oracle and other vendors have re-tuned their engagement-driven machine learning engines to focus more on clicks. While this means these engines are slower to adapt to changes in an individual's behaviors because clicks are rarer than opens, it also means they're better tuned to drive more bottom-of-the-funnel engagement."*



**Chad S. White**  
Head of Research,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

*"We always need to be more personalized and drive engagement, and AI enables that at scale. While there is work required to prove AI out and then enable and automate it, it delivers a clear lift in engagement and conversions. AI enablement continues to be a priority across brands."*



**Jennifer Lancaster Dana**  
Vice President,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting



☐ **Experiment with some promising email trends.**

In a survey of Oracle Marketing Consultants, the following were all rated as **low adoption-high impact tactics and technologies for 2023**, making them Competitive Differentiators:

☐ *Customer data platforms (CDPs).* At most companies, customers data is siloed, inconsistent, and difficult to mobilize. CDPs like **Oracle Unity** fix those problems and more by aggregating all customer data, cleaning it, securing it, and making it available to marketing, service, sales, and other platforms to create coherent and unified customer experiences.

☐ *Brand Indicators for Message Identification (BIMI).* Now that Apple has announced support for the authentication standard, brands that take **all the steps to set up BIMI** will soon see their logo displayed next to their sender name for the vast majority of their emails. It's a bit of upfront work—and significant expense—for the ongoing benefits of a stronger brand impression, higher opens, and greater trust.

☐ *AI-powered content and production recommendations.* As already discussed, AI-powered content recommendations are the only viable way to truly personalize at scale for retailers, media companies, travel companies, and other companies with lots of offerings.

☐ *AI-powered subject line and copywriting tools.* ChatGPT's fame has propelled interest in generative text engines, but it's also highlighted weaknesses of the technology, including off-brand copy.

*"Large language models like ChatGPT are entirely designed to figure out what the next best word in a sentence is to give a coherent answer that will make people say, That's a good answer. It does not have any ability to fact check what it has generated, and since it was trained on public text, it is prone to make errors."*



**Alex Stegall**

Director of Analytic & Strategic Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

*"While each step may be straightforward, collaboration is needed to complete your BIMI implementation. You will be reaching out to your creative team, IT resources, ESP, and potentially others to complete the process. Because so many people are involved—especially if you have to trademark the logo you're going to use—the whole process could take a few months to fully implement. So, start now!"*



**Daniel Deneweth**

Head of Email Deliverability Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

☐ **Make your customer experience more seamless.**

Your typical customer engages with your brand through multiple channels before making a purchase. That makes it essential that you're able to see customer activity across channels and respond across those channels to create a seamless and smooth omnichannel customer experience. That's the ideal, but it's challenging. So, set small goals to start to connect everything together. Here are three ways to do this:

☐ *Omnichannel orchestration.* Instead of trying to boil the ocean, focus on improving your cross-channel functionality with one channel. For instance, can you **make your curbside pickup more efficient** by integrating it into your SMS marketing or mobile app? Or can you **boost the effectiveness of your direct mail campaigns** by coordinating it with your email marketing program? How can you improve visibility across one additional channel? How can you better synchronize your message across channels while leveraging each channel's unique strengths, while being mindful of their weaknesses?

☐ *Personalized landing pages.* Personalization in email is a massive, powerful, and well-established trend. Personalizing landing pages so that tailored experience is seamlessly continued is also powerful, but less established.

☐ *Rationalize your martech stack.* In addition to making vendor management tough, having a sprawling, best-of-breed martech stack leads to integration and connectivity problems. We recommend a **best-of-suite approach** as a compromise between best of breed and single provider.

*"Companies have woken up to the importance of being able to create journeys and programs across several touch points and not continue to have channels siloed. They have a growing interest in making structural changes to their martech stack, looking for a single partner to be that central pillar of their martech stack in order to minimize integration points, reduce overhead costs and management, reduce points of failure, and more importantly create a unified profile of their customer."*



**Celestina Fisher**

Client Partner,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

- ☐ **Ramp up your A/B testing.** Listening to your customers is vital, and [crafting an effective testing program](#) is just one more way you can listen to what your customers are telling you that they prefer. Just make sure you [avoid these A/B testing pitfalls](#) so you don't waste your time, miss out on golden opportunities, or—worst of all—confidently come to the wrong conclusions. Some to-dos:
  - ☐ *Create an A/B testing calendar.* Avoid randomly testing things. Create a schedule so you can not only take advantage of every opportunity, but also build on past learnings and periodically confirm past findings.
  - ☐ *A/B test your triggered emails.* Most companies A/B test their promotional broadcast and segmented emails, but relatively few test their triggered emails. This is unfortunate because automated emails typically produce the biggest returns. That means that [the A/B testing opportunity for triggered emails is bigger](#), too. Plus, improvements in triggered campaigns deliver better subscriber experiences over a longer period of time because they're ongoing campaigns.
- ☐ *Consider multivariate testing.* If your email sends are big enough, consider doing some multivariate testing. Besides being able to test more than one variation at a time, multivariate testing allows you to test the interplay between different element combinations.
- ☐ *Socialize your A/B testing learnings across channels.* Knowing what works and doesn't work in one channel can be helpful in guiding your company's efforts in other channels. So, be sure to share your learnings with your colleagues.

*"Testing isn't just for one-off promotional emails. Set up lifecycle campaigns like welcome, nurture, and reengagement programs with testing options built in. Then you can frequently, and easily, update your content to test your offer, subject line, and other elements for weeks at a time and get statistically significant results."*



**Helen Lillard**  
Senior Principal Consultant,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

### Want more ideas for what to test?

Check out our [Website Optimization Ideas checklist](#) for more than 80 tests to consider, most of which also apply to email, SMS, and other channels.

### Need help taking advantage of the latest trends?

Oracle Marketing Consulting more than 500 consultants can help with AI, email design, omnichannel orchestration, testing, and much more. Want to discuss your needs? Talk to your Oracle account representative, [visit us online](#), or [drop us a line](#).



# Accelerating Campaign Build Processes

Holiday production volumes are generally considerably higher than your baseline the rest of the year. That's reason enough to invest in reducing your campaign production times, but economic worries and rapidly changing customer behaviors has many of our clients urgently looking to reduce the number of days it takes them to build and launch a campaign. Here are some to-dos:

☐ **Adopt a modular email architecture.**

Classic email templates are becoming obsolete. They are difficult to maintain, don't offer enough flexibility, make personalization cumbersome, and take too much time to turn into a final email campaign that's ready to send. Because of all of those weaknesses, more companies are migrating to [more efficient and personalization-friendly modular email architectures](#). To learn more, [watch our webinar on modular email architecture](#).

*"Having a modular email architecture is an important step to starting a lot of the other trends in this checklist. Once that is in place, A/B testing, automation, and AI-powered content are much easier to implement."*



**Patrick Colalillo**  
Creative Director for Creative Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

☐ **Streamline review and approval processes.**

Speeding up your campaign build times isn't just about your technology. It's also about your people, which can create major bottlenecks for your campaign production flow. Ask yourself:

- ☐ How many people are currently involved in reviewing and approving our campaigns?
- ☐ Do all of those people need to be involved? Do all of those people need to be involved with every campaign, or does it make sense for certain people only to be involved with certain kinds of campaigns?
- ☐ Do we have strict review and approval windows or deadlines? Can those be shortened? What happens if someone repeatedly fails to respond in time?

*"While there are a number of different collaborative proofing tools and processes out there, in the end, you still must designate one strategic decision-maker for every campaign. This role is critical to resolving conflicting brand feedback and ensuring an efficient process that avoids the churn of 5+ rounds of revisions so you can deploy on time."*



**Lauren Gannon**  
Vice President of Agency Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

☐ **Consider outsourcing campaign delivery.**

Simplify your campaign production workflow by having an agency upload, schedule, QA, and deploy your campaigns. The right partner allows your digital marketing team to focus on more strategic efforts while reducing errors and speeding up deployment.

*"Maintaining a strong quality assurance program takes constant recommitment because of routine changes in campaign rendering, code support, and more. Many of our clients find it a better use of their time to focus on strategy, optimization, and campaign planning rather than on day-to-day campaign staging and deployment."*



**Jennifer Lancaster Dana**

Vice President,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting



**Want to cut the time you spend on email production?**

Oracle Marketing Consulting's Creative Services team can help you build a modular email architecture to reduce your email build times by 25% or more. And our Campaign Deployment & Monitoring Services team can take over campaign uploading, quality assurance, and deployment so you can focus more on strategy. Want to discuss your needs? Talk to your Oracle account representative, [visit us online](#), or [drop us a line](#).



# Planning and running a successful holiday marketing program takes year-round effort. We can help.

Oracle Marketing Consulting has more than 500 of the leading marketing minds ready to help you to achieve more with the leading marketing cloud through...

- + Implementation Services
- + Platform Training & Adoption Services
- + Analytic & Strategic Services
- + List Growth & Demand Generation Services
- + Database Management & Compliance Services
- + Design Thinking & Innovation Services
- + Creative Services
- + Coding Services
- + Campaign Automation Services
- + Campaign Deployment & Monitoring Services
- + Email Deliverability Services
- + Performance Reporting Services
- + Website Optimization & Personalization Services
- + SMS & Mobile Push Services
- + Loyalty Program Services

## Want help?

Let's talk about how we can work together to seize your opportunities and overcome your challenges. Reach out to your Oracle account representative, [visit us online](#), or [drop us a line](#).