



**ORACLE**  
Marketing Consulting

Third 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 you a quarter-by-quarter plan for how to achieve more during this critical time of the year.

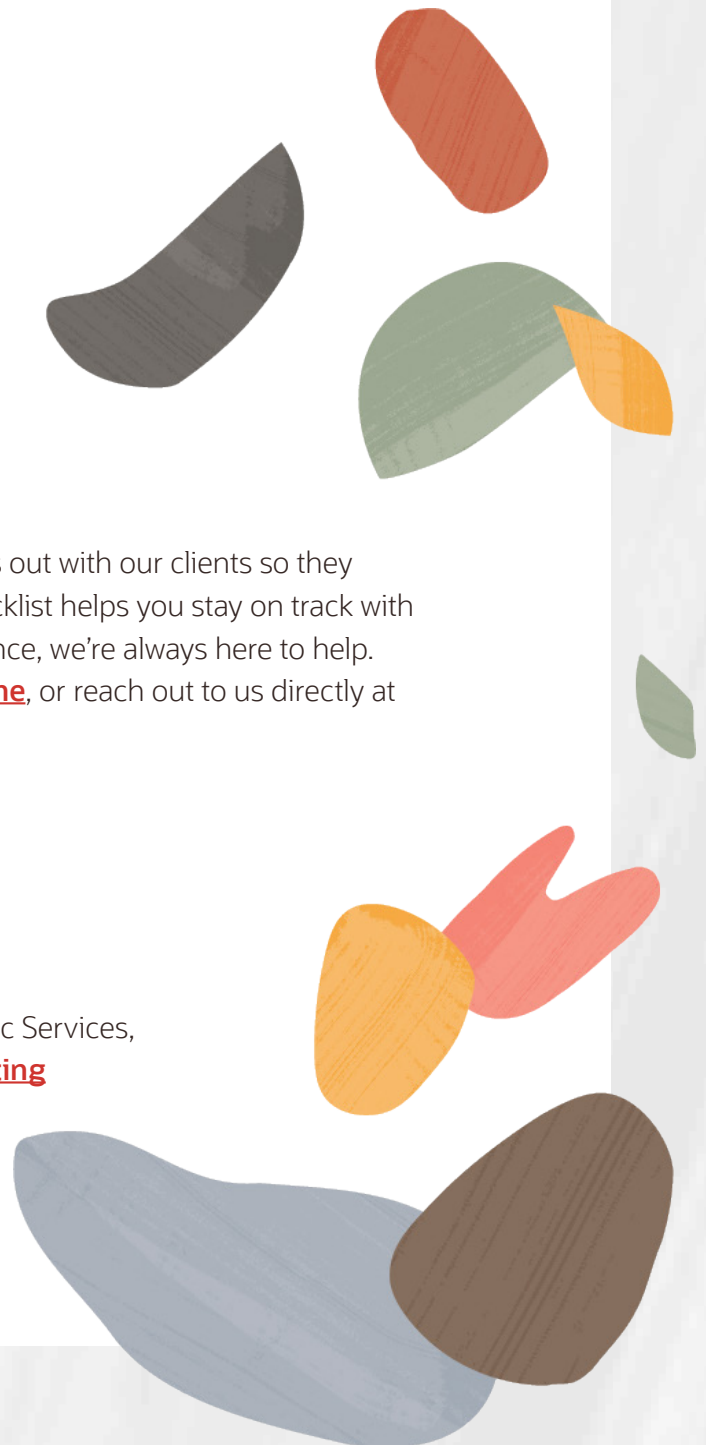
The third quarter is focused on the final prep for the start of the holiday season. In this Holiday Marketing Quarterly, we'll cover:

- + [Campaign Planning](#)
- + [Workload Management](#)
- + [Contingency Planning](#)
- + [Audience Optimization](#)
- + [Performance Monitoring Plans](#)
- + [Solidifying Your MarTech Stack](#)

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. And, of course, if you'd like assistance, we're always here to help. Talk to your Oracle account manager, visit us [online](#), or reach out to us directly at [CXMconsulting\\_ww@Oracle.com](mailto:CXMconsulting_ww@Oracle.com).



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



# Campaign Planning

What promotions and campaigns is your brand going to run and how can your email, SMS, and push marketing support them? Which days do you want to be in your subscribers' inboxes? How can you treat different segments of your customers differently to maximize your performance and keep your risks in check? Answering all of those questions is part of building a successful holiday campaign plan. Here's a to-do list to get your planning underway:

- Revisit your post-mortem review of the past holiday season.** In our [first quarter Holiday Marketing Quarterly](#), we provided a checklist for doing a thorough review of the performance of your last holiday season. Pull out that [holiday post-mortem](#) now!
- Finalize the promotional calendar across departments**—merchandising, retail, customer care, supply chain, and other relevant groups within your organization. An overall promotional plan should take into account the holiday behavior of your customers, your business goals, and the merchandising and supply chain realities that you face. Your digital marketing promotion plan should then enhance that.

*“Ensure last holiday season’s learnings are top of mind. Schedule monthly meetings to track implementation of procedural changes and plan A/B and multivariate tests to maximize engagement, deliverability, and revenue. As you plan for this year, consider the contingency plans that are prudent given this year’s possible disruptions to your holiday plans.”*



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



**Want more content planning advice?** Check out our [Content Calendar Assistant](#) for nearly 1,000 ideas to enhance your content planning, plus insights and tips from some of our nearly 500 digital marketing experts.

□ **Compile a list of key dates** for all the holidays, occasions, and events throughout the season that your brand wants to be a part of. While marketers need to be mindful of recession risks, they don't need to contend with major elections this November and pandemic-snarled supply chains have largely returned to normal. Here are some key dates to consider:

□ **Early gift-buying (September–October).** A near-record high of 60% of consumers began their holiday shopping before November last year, [according to the National Retail Federation](#). However, over the past decade, an average of nearly 57% began their shopping in October or earlier, so there's always been interest in early gift-buying messages. Supply chain problems have made subscribers even more receptive over the past few years.

□ **Holiday hosting and decorations (September–early November).** This messaging is all about getting ready for guests, getting your holiday cards done, and getting your house decorated. Often the messaging about getting guest-ready is as much about Thanksgiving as it is the holidays.

□ **Halloween (Oct. 31).** Traditionally, there's a significant jump in holiday messaging starting on the afternoon of Halloween.

□ **Black November.** Holiday messaging builds considerably throughout the early weeks of November, with a big jump typically in the first week. Some of that is propelled by early Black Friday messaging—hence the term “Black November.” Oracle Marketing Consulting data finds that Thursdays are particularly effective days to email, with many subscribers likely planning their weekend shopping at that time.

□ **Veterans Day/Singles Day (Nov. 11).** With engagement and revenue per email typically jumping during the second week of November, Veterans Day has increasingly become the new kickoff for the holiday season—but only in off-election years. Thankfully, this year is an off-year, being neither a presidential election or mid-term election year. So, marketers should be able to safely lean into promoting sales on this holiday.

*“When planning your promotional campaigns, be sure to take into account how long it will take to ship and deliver certain products. For example, furniture often takes weeks to deliver. So, it probably makes more sense to send your ‘Get your home ready for holiday guests’ messaging in September and October than it does in November. Supply chain delays may push out delivery times for certain products, so account for that, too.”*



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



□ **Early Thanksgiving Week (Nov. 19-22).** The strategies here are split, with some brands promoting teasers for Thanksgiving and Black Friday deals and other brands promoting “early access” and other deals that subscribers can act on immediately. Last year, the Monday before Thanksgiving was the fourth highest revenue-per-email day of the year, [according to Oracle Marketing Consulting research](#).

□ **Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 23).** Because most retailers are closed on Thanksgiving or open late in the afternoon, this day is generally about “one-day online-only deals.”

□ **Black Friday (Nov. 24).** Black Friday is routinely the second busiest email marketing day of the year, with lots of the messaging geared toward driving in-store sales. Since the pandemic, Black Friday has had a much stronger online component to go with its traditional in-store focus.

□ **Small Business Saturday (Nov. 25).** In addition to a popular day for small business promotions, many retailers extend their Black Friday deals into Saturday.

□ **Cyber Monday (Nov. 27).** Perennially the biggest ecommerce day of the year, Cyber Monday is also perennially the biggest email marketing volume day of the year. These deals often debut on Sunday afternoon and evening.

*“Avoid rushes and missed opportunities by creating a holiday content calendar that considers (1) what’s happening in your customer’s life throughout the season, (2) what’s happening for your brand, and (3) what happened between you and your audience this time last year. For extra credit, add a fourth layer for competitive insights or industry trends.”*

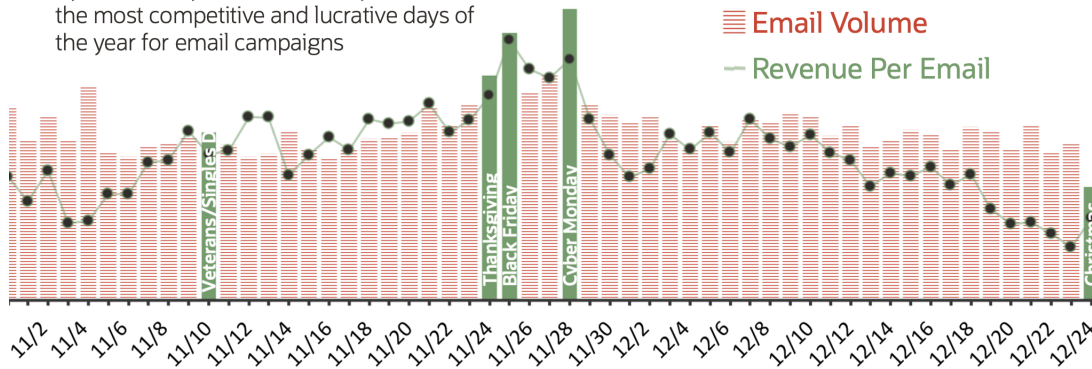


**Kelly Moran**  
Senior Art Director for Copy  
for Creative Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting



## The Highest Volume Email Days of 2022

Cyber Monday and Black Friday remain the most competitive and lucrative days of the year for email campaigns

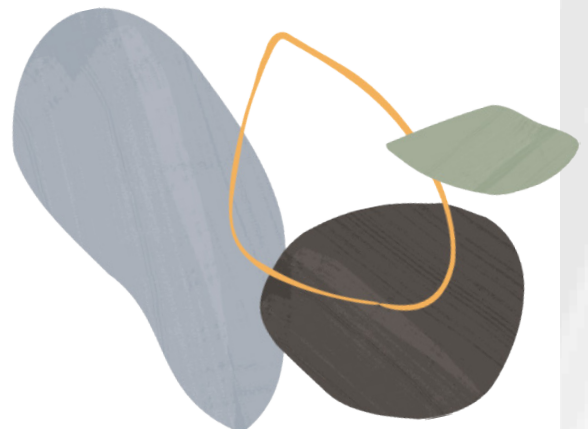


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**A New Baseline.** After highly irregular shopping behaviors during the 2020 and 2021 holiday seasons due to the pandemic, more typical patterns reemerged last year. That said, persistent inflation and a possible recession will continue to create headwinds for holiday sales.

- Giving Tuesday (Nov. 28).** A major occasion for nonprofits, Giving Tuesday also sees many retailers extend their Cyber Monday campaigns either for another day or into “Cyber Week,” which tends to end on Thursday.
- “12 Days of Christmas” (early December).** Because of the calendar this year, those retailers that run this campaign of daily deals for 12 days straight will likely start their campaigns between Nov. 29 and Dec. 4.
- Hanukkah (Dec. 7-Dec. 15).** This Jewish holiday is generally only mentioned in secondary content blocks, although a few major retailers dedicate primary content blocks to it on the first day.
- Green Monday (Dec. 11).** Even before it was branded Green Monday, this day tended to see a spike in ecommerce. Now that’s even more so the case, as consumers start to close out their online shopping.
- Free Shipping Day (Dec. 14).** As free shipping has become ubiquitous, this occasion has become less significant, with few brands mentioning it by name. Even so, some brands do mark the occasion by being in the inbox with a special shipping offer, such as free shipping with no minimum or free express shipping.



- Order-by deadlines for...**
  - Personalized and customized items.** Engravings, monograms, and other custom embellishments or designs take extra time.
  - Oversized and heavy items.** These products are generally drop shipped from manufacturers and are often slower to deliver.
  - Standard shipping.** Order-by deadlines can vary by region or state.
  - Express and expedited shipping.** Highlight variations and exclusions.
  - Overnight shipping.** Highlight variations and exclusions.
  - International shipping.** Highlight variations.
- Super Saturday (Dec. 23).** The last Saturday before Christmas Eve is generally an occasion to drive in-store sales. That will be especially true this year, as Super Saturday falls just two days before Christmas.

- Last-minute gift buying options (Dec. 20-23).** After shipping deadlines have passed, retailers promote store hours, “buy online pick up in store” (BOPIS), curbside pickup, local 1-hour delivery, gift cards, and e-gift cards.
- “Happy Holidays” (Dec. 24-Jan. 1).** These holiday greetings messages are sometimes accompanied by promotional secondary messages, but most brands keep them focused on just saying thanks. Since they generally aren’t promotional, brands tend to send them on a day when sales are low—typically, Dec. 24, Dec. 25, or Jan. 1.

*“December is a fiercely competitive time and you can gain a key advantage if you can pivot quicker than your competitors. One way to do this is planning contingency and evergreen offers in advance. That way, if shopping behaviors shift, you’ll have specific value props at the ready. For ideas, review your campaigns from across channels from last year, as well as those of your competitors, both direct and indirect.”*



**Scott Multer**  
Executive Creative Director,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting



*“The rise of ‘buy online pick up in store’ (BOPIS), curbside pickup, and local 1-hour delivery over the past couple of years has rewritten the messaging strategies available to bricks-and-clicks retailers for the week before Christmas. Now they have many more options besides promoting just in-store deals, gift cards, and e-gift cards.”*



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

- Christmas Eve and Day (Dec. 24-25).** While some brands tout e-gift cards and other promotions, many don't send emails on these days out of respect for the holiday—as well as the fact that emails underperform.
- Day after Christmas Day till the end of year (Dec. 26-31).** Late Christmas Day generally marks the start of after-Christmas sales and gift card redemption messaging that encourages people to “get what you really wanted.”
- New Year's (Jan. 1).** Although most B2C brands send messages about New Year resolutions, some send “Happy New Year” messages in lieu of a “Happy Holidays” email if they feel that the days around Christmas are too valuable to dedicate to this kind of message.
- “Year in Review” (mid December–early January).** Dec. 31 and Jan. 1 are favorite send dates for these emails, which summarize the unique interactions of customers with your brand. When such personalization isn't possible, brands typically highlight overall customer usage.

**Draft an email cadence and targeting strategy.**

For the days, occasions, and events you identified above—plus any others that are important to your brand—determine how many emails will be associated with each one. Also, for each email, determine whether it will be sent to your entire active mailing list or just a segment of it. For the latter, what will the targeting criteria be?

**Balance your holiday plan with your deliverability risks.**

After you formulate your email cadence and targeting strategy, go back to it and revise it with your deliverability risks in mind. How good is your sender reputation now? Can you improve it before the holidays arrive? Under your current cadence plan, is your holiday email volume ramping up too quickly?

*“Mailbox providers often tighten spam filters during the holiday season. To protect yourself, take an extra close look at your deliverability health before setting your holiday mailing calendar. Now is the time to shore up any weak areas of deliverability health, including low open rates, high bounce rates, high complaint rates, **blocklistings**, and any of the other **factors that weigh negatively against your sender reputation.**”*



**Daniel Deneweth**  
Head of Email Deliverability Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting





□ **Develop a testing plan.** Ad hoc A/B and multivariate testing isn't as powerful as having **[a carefully considered testing schedule](#)**. Don't wait until you're in the thick of the holiday season to come up with elements to test. Review your tests from the past couple of holiday seasons and use that to inform a testing plan for this holiday season. High-impact elements to consider testing include **[subject lines](#)**, headlines, hero images, and **[calls-to-action](#)**. Our **[Website Optimization Ideas to Explore](#)** checklist has some great A/B testing suggestions for images, CTAs, and other elements that are used in both emails and on the web.

□ **Work out any adjustments** you'll make to your triggered emails. Will you make **[seasonal adjustments to your automated emails](#)**, whether it's holiday-related imagery, copy, navigation links, or secondary messaging blocks? Will you adjust the timing or flow of these emails, such as triggering cart abandonment emails more quickly on Cyber Monday because of faster consideration times on the part of customers? Don't neglect your automated and transactional emails during holiday planning.

*"When reviewing test results, if one version 'wins' according to the primary KPI but loses to a KPI further down the funnel, it might be worth reconsidering the test results and deciding which matters more. Solve for the full funnel."*



**Tommy Hummel**  
Analytics Manager for Analytic &  
Strategic Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

*"Retailers that have category browse abandonment triggers in place should review those campaigns with a holiday lens. Pay close attention to the product categories and product assortments you plan to promote during the holidays so these triggered emails can amplify the impact of planned promotional campaigns."*



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

**Looking for more automated campaign ideas?** Check out our **[Automated Campaign Ideas](#)** checklist, which contains more than 110 triggered campaigns, plus tips from our consultants on how to maximize the potential of automation.

**Need help with campaign planning?** Oracle Marketing Consulting's Analytic & Strategic Services team can help you plan an effective holiday marketing cadence and our Creative Services team can help you with content planning and campaign creation. Want to discuss your needs? Talk to your Oracle account manager, **[visit us online](#)**, or reach out to us directly at **[CXMconsulting\\_ww@Oracle.com](mailto:CXMconsulting_ww@Oracle.com)**.

# Workload Management

Now that you have a campaign plan, you need to put the resources in place to be able to execute it. Peak holiday campaign volume is generally about 50% higher than a brand's baseline non-holiday volume—and that doesn't include triggered campaigns, which also need **seasonal refreshes**. Given those increases, you likely won't be able to build all of your campaigns without help or some serious front-loading of the copywriting, design, and coding work. Here are some to-dos that address that challenge:

- Improve your campaign build process.** Look for ways to shorten the amount of time it takes to conceive, create, and launch your digital marketing campaigns. For example, to speed up production, email marketers are moving away from traditional email templates, where you have a template for every kind of email you send. Instead, they're migrating to **modular email architectures**, where they create a library of content modules that they then stack to create templates and individual emails. This approach is more flexible and adaptive, allowing a brand to swap in and out content blocks that serve specific use cases. Our clients who have adopted a modular email architecture have generally reduced email production time by 25% to 40%. As a bonus, it also makes testing and personalization easier, too.
- Work ahead on campaign assets** that you know you'll need during the holidays. Start on them now when you have more time. Those assets might include:
  - Holiday headers.** These logo and header treatments add seasonal motifs, such as snowflakes, evergreen trees, and stars.
  - Seasonal navigation bars.** The category-level links in your campaign navigation bars should probably change throughout the year to reflect seasonal popularity. During the holiday season, it's common to add a "Gifts" or "Holiday" link to nav bars. Often those seasonal links are stylized in some way so they stand out. As you plan your nav bar strategy, be sure to look at both desktop and mobile navs, as well as any top and bottom nav structure you might have in your mobile version.
  - Secondary holiday messaging blocks.** Do you have products or product categories you routinely promote during the holiday season? If so, create promotional messaging and email content blocks for those now. Remember to consider using them in both your broadcast and segmented campaigns, as well as your automated and **transactional campaigns**.

*"We often create 'holiday templates' for clients that involve streamlining modules and minimizing change to tertiary elements. This reduces our turn-around time to a day or two, allowing us to create reactionary campaigns."*



**James Wurm**  
Head of Coding Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting



- **Gift guide recovery module.** These content blocks go toward the bottom of your emails and typically present links to a range of product categories that are popular with your gift shoppers.
- **Gift services footers.** These modules are also placed near the bottom of your emails and include details on or links to gift guides, order-by deadlines, gift wrapping, return policies, financing options, and other information that's more important during the holiday season.

*"If you have an email architecture system in place, then you've set your design and production team up for a successful holiday. Instead of creating ad hoc holiday templates, you can now simply apply your holiday branding to your existing system, saving you countless hours of development and testing. Most brands will add a few new modules seasonally, making their modular architecture even more flexible and adaptive throughout the year."*



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

- **Start designing any special campaigns early.** Are you using a one-off design for your Thanksgiving, Black Friday, or Cyber Monday campaign? Are you doing a "12 Days of Christmas" campaign? Will any of your holiday emails involve interactive email elements, especially ones you don't have much experience with? Start working on these campaigns now so they can be in a nearly complete state going into the holiday season. Try to get as many emails as possible 80% to 90% done.

*"We include a holiday gift guide recovery module in nearly all of our holiday emails. Since shopping behaviors can change quickly throughout the holidays, this recovery module gives additional options to our audience. It also provides us with info to retarget customers with follow-up campaigns."*



**Nick Cantu**  
Creative Director for Creative Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting



*“For one client, we built a ‘12 Deals of Christmas’ template that stuck to a format and we created the emails weeks in advance. They were easy to adjust if testing was incorporated, an offer was changed, or if inventory shifted and a product needed to be swapped. The overall goal is to have an arsenal of email content built out and ready for deployment.”*



**James Wurm**  
Head of Coding Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

**Develop a plan for handling workload increase during the holiday season.**

Even doing some work ahead of time, the increases in campaign development during the holiday season can be substantial for many B2C brands. Consider the following options to secure extra resources:

**Shift people internally temporarily to help with campaigns,** whether it's on a part- or full-time basis for the season. Do you have web developers you can cross-train so they can help with email coding? Do you have copywriters elsewhere within marketing that can be cross-trained to help with SMS copywriting? Do you have designers elsewhere within marketing that can be cross-trained to help with push campaigns? If so, start training these people now in the nuances of these marketing channels.

**Hire freelancers or an agency.** When you need expert help for a limited period of time, this is often the best solution.

*“We’ve developed several production efficiencies to be able to handle the 3-4X increase in email volume that we experience with some of our clients. We map out send dates, holidays, sales, etc.—and have it all approved in advance. Next, we create email wireframes outlining our content plan. This provides clear messaging direction to our team members before they start work on a campaign.”*



**Nick Cantu**  
Creative Director for Creative Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

**Need help with your holiday campaign workload?**

Oracle Marketing Consulting’s Creative Services and Coding Services teams can help you handle peak holiday campaign production, as well as craft seasonal designs, gift services footers, holiday headers, and other digital marketing assets. Our Campaign Deployment & Monitoring Services team can help with deployment, quality assurance, and other campaign services. Want to discuss your needs? Talk to your Oracle account manager, [visit us online](#), or reach out to us directly at [CXMconsulting\\_ww@Oracle.com](mailto:CXMconsulting_ww@Oracle.com).

# Contingency Planning

Planning for the unexpected is an everyday practice, but during the holiday season it takes on heightened importance because so much is at stake. Get prepared with this to-do list:

**Create or update your apology template.**

In addition, [understand when you should send an apology or correction](#) and then have a clear, documented plan for how you'll handle them. Hopefully you won't need it, but the holiday season has historically been ripe for apologies and corrections due to campaign content mistakes and websites crashing under Black Friday and Cyber Monday traffic spikes.

**Plan for potential winter storms and other natural disasters.**

What will you do if you have to close stores or your deliveries are delayed because of a storm or disaster? Be prepared to send a [geo-segmented crisis message](#) email to those affected, whether it's an update about store closures, a change in hours, or other service updates. Have a designated email template ready to go to handle these kinds of notifications to subscribers. Here are [examples of how brands have responded to past storms](#).



*"If we've learned anything from the past few years, it's that email is the channel businesses use to [communicate quickly and effectively during a time of crisis](#). Being proactively prepared with pre-built templates or ready-made emails is a way email teams can try to get out in front of last-minute and emergency requests. On the targeting front, having a 'contingency filter' ready with a preset target audience on file that you know you can launch quickly is a good idea."*



**Peter Briggs**

Director of Analytic & Strategic Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

## Want to make sure you're prepared to respond to a crisis?

Oracle Marketing Consulting's Campaign Deployment & Monitoring Services team offers crisis and rush campaign support with 24x7 follow-the-sun coverage that can help your company get a critical message out the door in 2 hours or less. Want to discuss your needs? Talk to your Oracle account manager, [visit us online](#), or reach out to us directly at [CXMconsulting\\_ww@Oracle.com](mailto:CXMconsulting_ww@Oracle.com).

# Audience Optimization

A key element of holiday marketing success is having a healthy, engaged, and growing audience going into November. All three of those elements are important because a large list doesn't mean much if subscribers aren't engaged and campaigns aren't reaching their inboxes. Here's our checklist for optimizing your audience going into the holidays:

- **Maximize your best audience acquisition sources.** Examine the performance of your audience acquisition sources, whether it's the signup form on your homepage, on your in-store kiosks, during checkout, or any number of other places. Then [optimize your signup forms](#) and drive more traffic to the ones that are producing the most value—that is, the number of subscribers from that source multiplied by the average monetary value of those subscribers. At the same time, deemphasize or shut down sources that produce lots of subscribers who are low-value and prone to quickly unsubscribing or complaining.
- **Reactivate inactive subscribers.** Anywhere from 30% to 50% of an email list is typically composed of [inactive subscribers](#) who haven't opened or clicked one of your emails in many months. Getting some of those subscribers to reengage is a form of list growth because you're building your active email list for the months ahead. Higher subscriber engagement also helps boost deliverability. Whatever the channel, launch your reengagement efforts early in the third quarter.

*"Many senders wait until the holiday season to kick off reactivation programs, but these efforts will most likely cause some short-term harm to your sender reputation. So, do your reactivations early—especially of older list segments—and allow time for your reputation to recover to healthy levels before you reach holiday peak season."*



**Daniel Deneweth**  
Head of Email Deliverability Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

## Looking to grow your audiences faster?

Check out our [Audience Acquisition Source Ideas checklist](#), which details 18 kinds of acquisition sources, including advice on how to optimize them and the proper protections to put in place to limit your risks.

**Review and optimize your welcome programs.**

Typically, brands see a large influx of new subscribers during the fourth quarter. Ensure that you're making the best first impression and driving value immediately by [reviewing your welcome program](#) for your email, SMS, and push channels—especially if you haven't for a while. Specifically...

**Audit your existing welcome programs.**

If you're using [double opt-in](#), make sure that process is functioning properly and your opt-in confirmation request is clear and doesn't have anything to distract recipients from confirming their signup. Ensure that your first welcome campaign is being triggered immediately after signup, has clear branding, and is generating value. If you're sending a series, check the content and timing of subsequent welcome messages.

**Seasonalize your welcome programs.**

Consumers who sign up for your promotional emails, texts, and push messages during the fourth quarter are likely looking for gift ideas and discounts. [Add seasonal imagery and messaging to your welcome campaigns](#) to

better serve these gift-minded subscribers. Consider adding a welcome message to your series that highlights your gift guides, gift wrapping services, and other holiday offerings and services.

*"Your welcome will be one of the most opened emails you ever send. Some of our clients see welcome email open rates of over 50%. The real estate in this email is incredibly valuable, so think your ask through carefully."*



**Clint Kaiser**  
Head of Analytic & Strategic Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

**Ask your subscribers about their holiday intentions and interests.**

Because of once-a-year gift buying, subscriber behavior from earlier in the year may not be a good guide to their holiday shopping interests. Consider sending a [progressive profiling campaign](#) in the early weeks of November to find out what kinds of products your subscribers will be most interested in this holiday season.

**Want to grow your list and improve your onboarding?** Oracle Marketing Consulting's List Growth & Demand Generation Services team can help you audit your subscriber acquisition sources, optimize them to maximize safe list growth, and avoid problematic sources that are hurting your performance. And our Campaign Automation Services team can help you improve your welcome campaigns and other automated campaigns. Talk to your Oracle account manager, [visit us online](#), or reach out to us directly at [CXMconsulting\\_ww@Oracle.com](mailto:CXMconsulting_ww@Oracle.com).



# Performance Monitoring Plans

The holiday season moves quickly, with lots of campaigns and lots of action. To ensure your plans are on track, keep a close watch on your performance metrics. Here's our analytics and reporting checklist:

- Identify ongoing holiday reporting needs.** What email performance data do you need, how often do you need it, and what support is needed to get it? Your strategies may need day-to-day adjustments—or even morning-to-afternoon adjustments, in some cases. Make sure you have timely data to drive those decisions.

*"If you now have in place a customer data platform (CDP), such as [Oracle Unity](#), be sure to take advantage of the opportunity this holiday season to observe customers' behaviors across identified and pseudonymous channels and then use machine learning to identify which channels and content are working best. These insights allow you to target small, homogenous groups of customers, increasing both customer relevance and customer spend."*



**Patrick Maxwell**  
Senior Director of Solution Architecture,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting

- Be prepared to review analytics and performance results quickly so it can inform upcoming campaigns.** The results of your Thanksgiving Day campaign hold insights that can improve your Cyber Monday campaign, and the results of your Cyber Monday campaign hold insights that can improve your Green Monday campaign—but only if you're set up to review your analytics in a timely fashion and translate your data into insights you have time to act on. Have a plan for how you'll do this.

*"Seeing that an important metric is up or down beyond a normal range isn't going to be enough. [You have to determine the why](#). Sometimes it's obvious, but other times you have put on your Sherlock Holmes hat to find the driver(s). Is it happening across all audiences? All domains? Did something else change versus the norm—the offer, timing, or creative? Sharpen your sleuthing instincts to quickly get to the bottom of it!"*



**Clint Kaiser**  
Head of Analytic & Strategic Services,  
Oracle Marketing Consulting





**Pre-determine performance tolerance levels.**

For each of your key performance indicators, what are your lower bounds below which corrective action is needed?

**Opens.** What's the minimum average open rate you can tolerate before needing to tighten your engagement segmentation? As we pass the two-year anniversary of the launch of **Apple's Mail Privacy Protection**, thankfully adoption has plateaued. Unlike last holiday season, year-over-year comparisons will be useful this holiday season, so make use of those.

**Revenue.** If you miss an email marketing revenue target for a week, how will you respond? Will you do additional A/B testing? Send a remarketing campaign or an additional segmented email? Will you target more broadly, risking a dip in engagement? Whatever your plan, be prepared to deal with the negative consequences, whether it's more email production costs or a hit to your deliverability.

**Deliverability.** What will you do if you see a decrease in your inbox placement rates? **The causes of deliverability problems** can vary widely, but you should have an action plan for adjusting targeting across inbox providers and for **monitoring blocklists**.

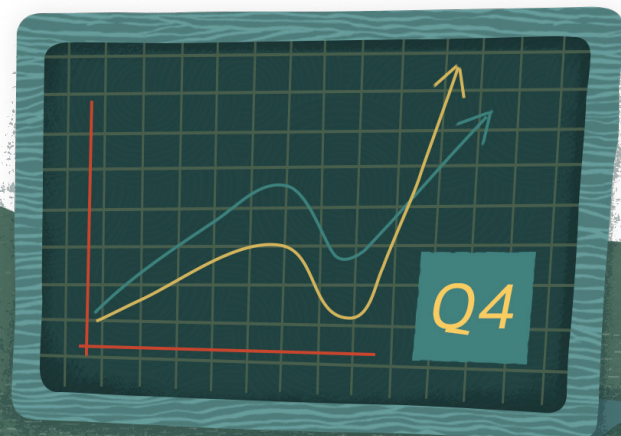
**Unsubscribes.** Pay extra attention to how your most valuable subscribers are reacting to your holiday campaigns.

*"As you ramp up volume and frequency during peak holiday weeks, it is critical to monitor KPIs around file health to ensure you understand the impact of increased mailing frequency. Remember, sending more volume can 'dilute' your unsubscribe rate, so you may not see your rate spike but you could be seeing significantly more total unsubscribes from the more aggressive frequency."*



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

**Need ready access to key performance data?** Oracle Marketing Consulting's Performance Reporting Services team can enable you to make more data-driven decisions, helping you access important data, focus on the right KPIs, view your performance holistically, and gain critical context for your metrics. Talk to your Oracle account manager, [visit us online](#), or reach out to us directly at [CXMconsulting\\_ww@Oracle.com](mailto:CXMconsulting_ww@Oracle.com).



# Solidify Your Martech Stack

Adding to, updating, or making big changes to your marketing technology stack during the holiday season invites disaster. Here's our checklist for avoiding problems:

- Finish implementing any new martech tools** by the end of the third quarter—or by mid October at the latest!
  - Does your martech solution have the bandwidth and proven up-time to ensure your holiday mailings are supported?
  - Do you have all the tools to support holiday messaging? For example, [Oracle Infinity](#) can be implemented to support real-time out-of-stock and back-in-stock triggered emails.
  - Are all your critical integrations with data and reporting systems ready to drive your messaging to your holiday audiences? Better and simpler integration is a compelling reason to [simplify your martech stack](#) by adopting a best-of-suite approach.
  - For your email program, are any IP warmup plans set to finish before the end of October?
  - Have you left enough time for your marketing team to get trained on the new solutions?
  - Does the addition of new technology require any process changes?

- Get new service and partnership relationships firmly established.** It's not just new tech that can trip you up. With services, make sure that responsibilities are clearly delineated, processes are solidly in place, and lines of communication are open. Understand what happens if you have an issue that needs to be escalated during the holiday season...say, at 8pm on Black Friday.

*"When implementing any new marketing technology, make sure you allow time for change navigation. Not only do you need to have the time to fully implement the solution, integrate it, connect all the data streams, and fully test it—but you need to train your team on the platform and institute process changes."*



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

*"For most B2C companies, Q4 will drive as much website traffic as the rest of the year combined. Ensure you have behavioral and inventory triggers in place to react to the expected traffic. Low-Inventory notifications, back-in-stock triggers, wish list alerts, and others should be at the top of your list to be ready-to-roll before Q4. If you don't have inventory-based trigger capabilities, [Oracle Infinity](#) can help you respond to these critical behavior opportunities."*



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



**Need help getting your Oracle technology live quickly?** Oracle Marketing Consulting's Implementation Services team can help you make sure your Oracle technology is configured to integrate seamlessly with your current infrastructure to perfectly meet your specific marketing, business, and analytics goals. Talk to your Oracle account manager, [visit us online](#), or reach out to us directly at [CXMconsulting\\_ww@Oracle.com](mailto:CXMconsulting_ww@Oracle.com).

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

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## 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](#).