

CHRISTMAS MARKETING SURVIVAL GUIDE

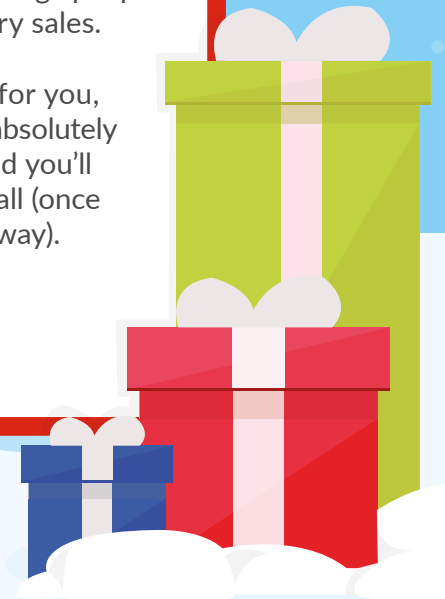


The C word is coming up: Christmas. For most people, it's a fun time of year with celebrations aplenty, pumpkin spice lattes, and decorations galore.

For others, Christmas is a chore.

This doesn't bode well if you're a small business trying to market your wares in the busiest retail period of the year – but we understand. Christmas is not for everyone. But it's a necessity if you want to make money, gain a loyal customer base, and encourage people to return to spend their money in the January sales.

We've put together a marketing guide just for you, the ones who avoid all things jingly until it's absolutely necessary. You'll get through this season, and you'll discover that it's not actually that bad after all (once you see those monthly income reports, anyway).



You might not want to decorate your premises for Christmas, but it will make your customers more receptive to buying your products. Christmas decorations can put customers into a buying mindset, especially if a display includes a sign to suggest who would make a great recipient for that product.

Fun and festive posters are a great way to attract buyers to your promotions. Use them to draw people in by placing in a window, or highlight particularly great offers in-store with some large and eye-catching posters on your interior walls.



STEP TWO

You Don't Have To Have Christmas Music

For anyone who has ever worked in retail, Christmas songs become a trigger for a nervous twitch. The same CD played over, and over, and over again can turn even the most sane gift shop owner to delirium.

Instead of the same old Christmas music playing in the background, lure customers into your shop with some promotional flyers instead! If you feel you must have some music, why not tie this in to a special late opening event and have some local musicians come to play in your shop? This would be an unusual and attention-grabbing tactic sure to draw increased footfall into your premises.

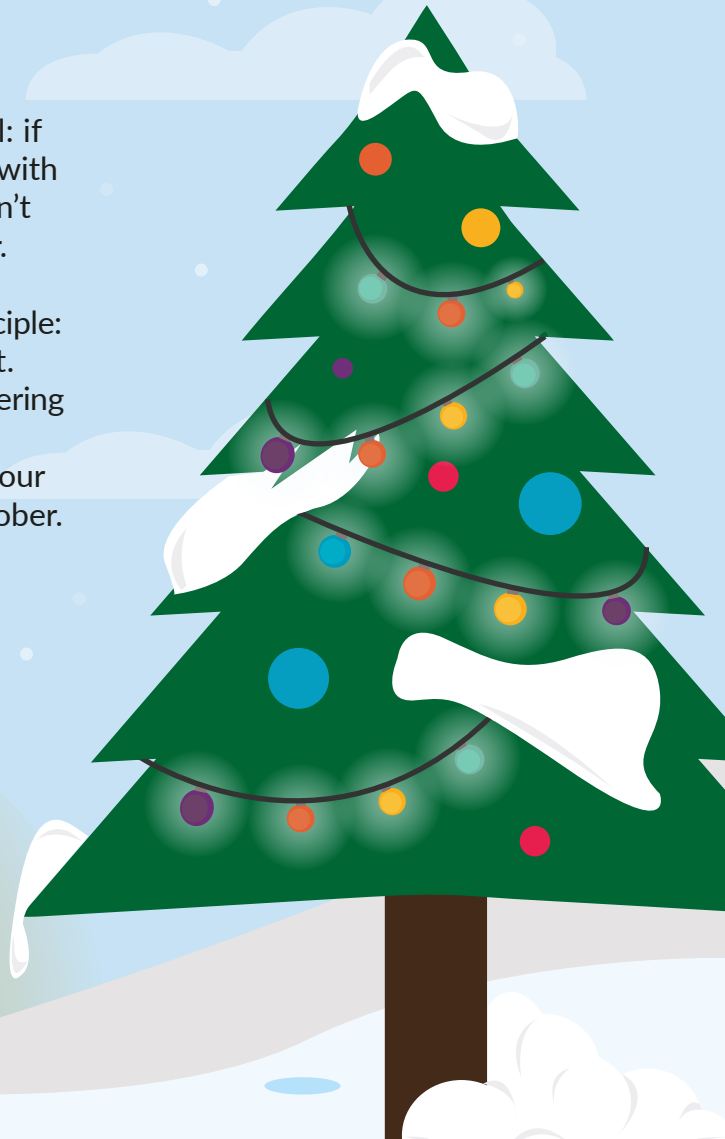
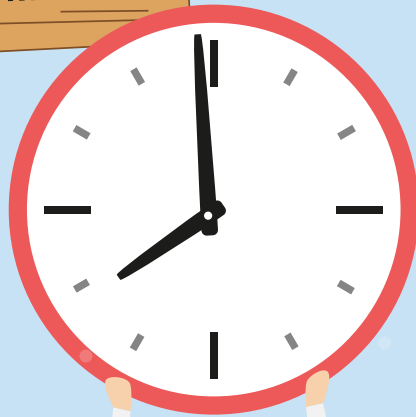


Step Three:

**Send Out Your Cards
(And Promotions)
At The Last-Minute**

This sounds a bit backwards, but it can work well: if you send holiday cards to your existing customers with a very short-term promotional offer inside, you won't need to run Christmas promotions from November.

A limited-time-only offer works on the scarcity principle: the less likely it is to occur, the more people want it. Prepare for a short-term rush in the week you're offering a fabulous promotion, and you'll be able to get the Christmas shoppers out of the door, hands full of your products, without starting your promotions in October.



If you grit your teeth through the December rush, and employ some savvy marketing techniques, you'll see a boost in January revenue, too!

So, rather than focussing on the dreaded festive season, gear up for the January sales instead. Prepare your customers for the biggest sale of the year by encouraging them to buy their Christmas gifts with you – in return for a money-off voucher they'll get to spend in January. This ensures you not only boost your sales in the busiest retail period of the year, but you also set yourself up for repeat custom. Once someone has spent money in your shop a couple of times, they're far more likely to develop a loyalty and return in the future – discount or no discount!



Prepare Your New Year Giveaways

While you're looking to the future, why not think about potential giveaways to encourage custom in the New Year?

A perfect example would be a branded notebook or wall calendar, which your customers will use for the entire year – and therefore see your branding for months to come! You could offer a small goodie bag for people who spend above a certain amount during December or January, and include branded merchandise like a diary, some stickers, and a referral discount voucher to give to their friends!

So there you have it: Christmas doesn't have to be all that tricky to navigate. If you run some savvy, short-term promotions and think about the lifetime value of a new customer drawn in by Christmas cheer, it's not all that bad after all.

