

Strategic winter retail timeline

In what year does New Year's Day come before Christmas? EVERY year!

While the winter holiday may be short, the retail holiday season spans several months. And planning and preparation for a merry holiday season in retail can start as early as March.

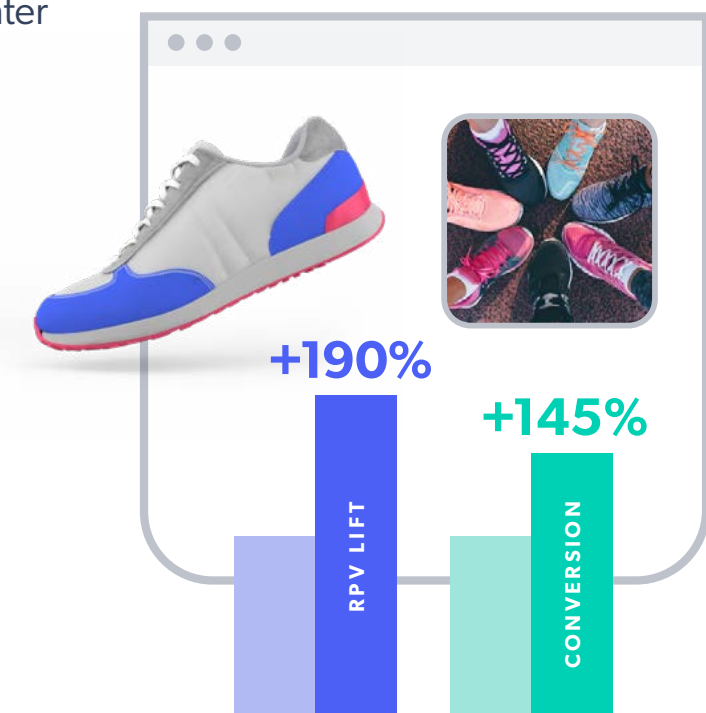
When it comes to holiday campaign planning, always expect the unexpected, whether that's supply chain issues, inflationary pressures, or delayed product launches. Nip potential problems in the bud by getting a head start.

We've created a timeline to help you get ahead and set yourself up for a joyous holiday season.

March/April

Whether you're a brand or retailer, solidifying your budget and mapping out an internal timeline is key to identifying resources and needs ahead of the winter holiday season.

- ✓ Allocate a budget for user-generated content (UGC). Adding ratings, reviews, and customer photos and videos is the perfect way to put a bow on your product pages. Collecting UGC early on can be the difference between a successful sales season and a flop. **Best-in-class sites with UGC see a 190% revenue per visitor lift and a 145% higher conversion rate.**¹
- ✓ Retailers should start contacting brands to initiate partnerships for must-have products for the winter holidays early in the spring.
- ✓ Brands, meanwhile, should secure places on shelves and identify which ad campaigns to run.



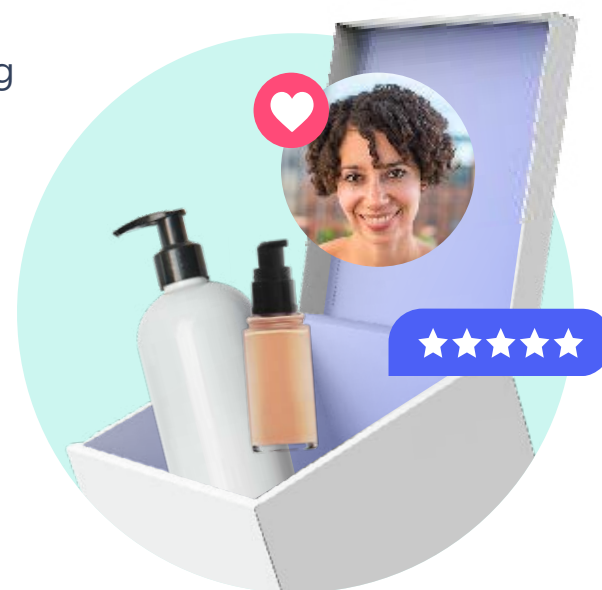
May/June

As the holiday picture becomes clearer, lock in your holiday roadmap and campaigns for advertising and sampling.

Sampling is an excellent opportunity to pack your product pages with fresh, relevant UGC.

Over 80% of shoppers say UGC recency is important when making purchasing decisions online.²

- ✓ Retailers should invite brands into their UGC program by encouraging review collection and syndication.
- ✓ Brands should start sampling campaigns to impress their retail partners. We can help with that too!



July

Expected mid-July, Prime Day, the two-day event across the web, is now the unofficial start of the holiday shopping season.

- ✓ Use this event to spur organic review collection, whether you sell on Amazon or not. Enable and optimize your email and text message review collection:
 - Make your subject line catchy and keep it under 20 characters
 - Keep your message focused on the review request
 - Account for shipping and the time it takes for customers to experience your product



August

Haven't started a sampling campaign yet? There's still enough time to collect UGC before Cyber Week kicks off in November.

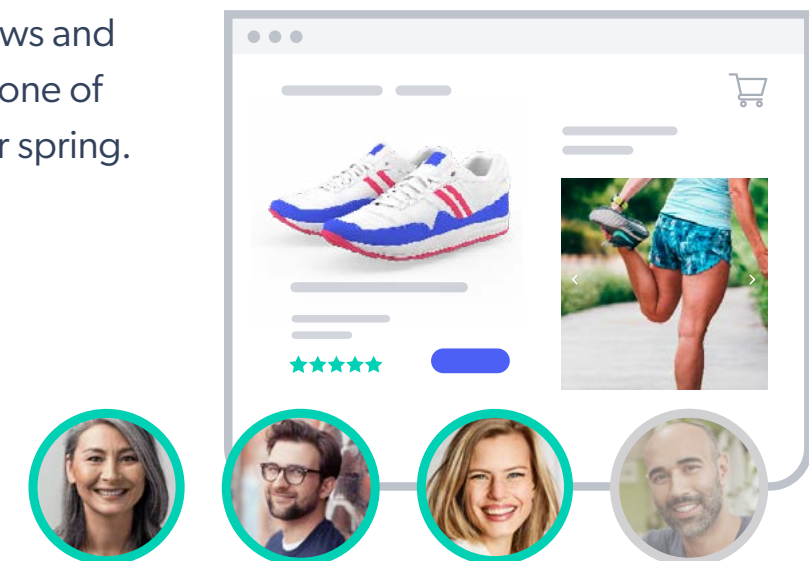
- ✓ Start by identifying gaps in your UGC coverage. When thinking about your hero items for spring, make sure to drive shoppers to pages with the content needed for conversions.
- ✓ Sampling isn't the only way to go. You could run a social media campaign or retarget customers for feedback on their purchases. Both options are great for boosting your on-site and syndicated UGC count.
- ✓ Take note of reviews and questions without responses. Shoppers expect responses from brands and retailers to positive and negative feedback.



October

Get ready for prime time! Make sure your team and your systems are equipped to handle any upcoming spikes in shopping activity.

- ✓ Solidify your planned code freezes, increase staffing to appropriate levels, and have a backup plan in place in case a system breaks or goes down while shoppers are browsing and buying.
- ✓ Ahead of your code freeze, add the social content you've collected from previous sampling campaigns. This gives shoppers what they want to see and increases conversions – **3 out of 4 shoppers want to see visual and social UGC on product pages as they're shopping.**³
- ✓ Continue to respond to reviews and questions. This time frame is one of the peak research periods for spring.



November

Lean into the holiday spirit!

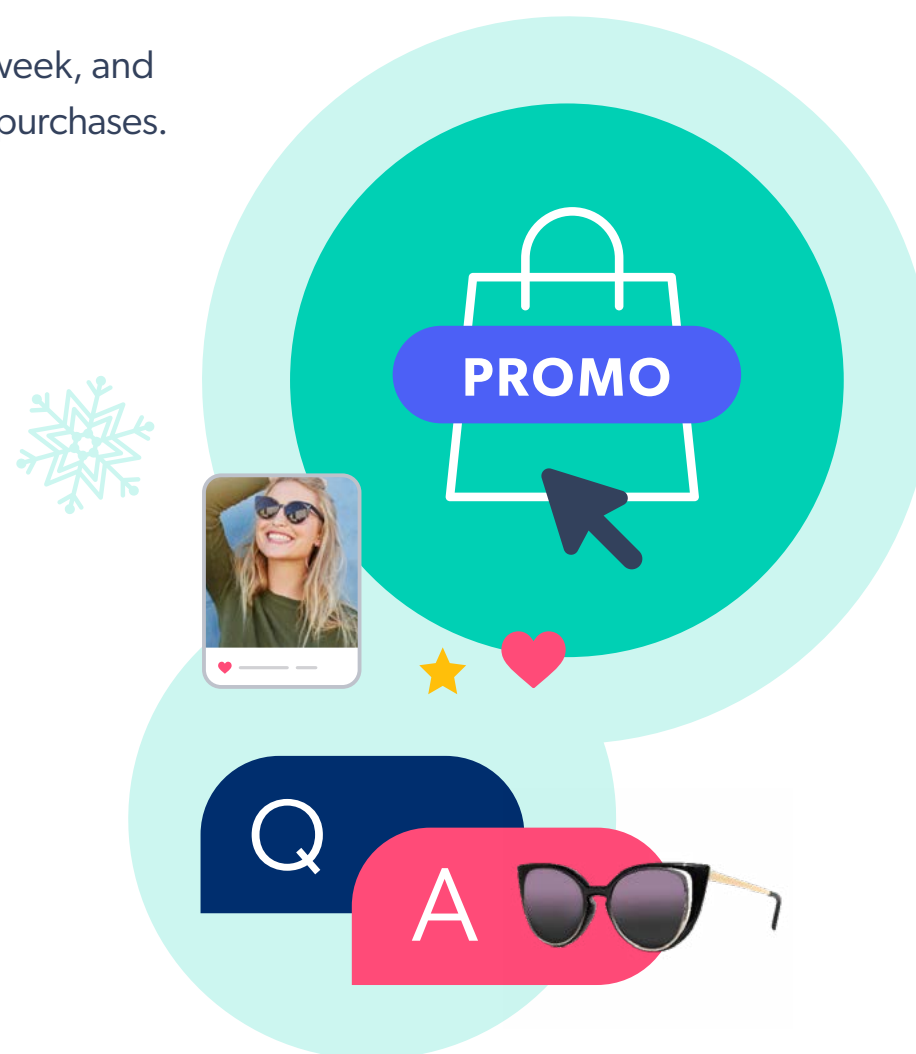
While a debate still looms over the socially acceptable time to put up holiday decorations, gift shopping can start as early as Halloween.

- ✓ Start running promotions ahead of Thanksgiving week, and you'll see shoppers buying early to space out their purchases.

December

Holiday shopping isn't over yet.

- ✓ Learn from your Cyber Week successes and failures and finish the holiday shopping season strong. Is there a tweak you can make in a product description or fresh social content you can upload into a gallery?
- ✓ These minor tweaks can help. Also, make sure you're continuing to engage your shoppers. Responding to UGC during this time is crucial.



Starting early will lead to a holly jolly holiday season for your business.

And Bazaarvoice is here to help. From sampling campaigns, to on-site photo galleries, to retail syndication, we've got you covered. Our partnership is the gift that keeps on giving.

[Learn more](#)

Sources:

1. Bazaarvoice ROI Benchmarks, December 2021.
2. Thurmond, Colin. "Review recency: The third pillar to a successful UGC program." Bazaarvoice. April 2021.
3. "A picture's worth a thousand purchases: How visual and social content increase online sales." Bazaarvoice. January 2021.