



Ultimate Christmas Advertising Guide.

a step-by-step plan for your business on how to run a successful Christmas campaign.



introduction.

Are you looking to run a successful christmas campaign? Our ultimate advertising guide will show you how.

Christmas can be a stressful time for many people, particularly if you're tasked with planning and running a festive marketing campaign to help your business capitalise on seasonal spending.

It can feel like untangling those Christmas tree lights you put away perfectly last year, but there's no need to worry – our **Ultimate Christmas Advertising Guide** is here to help.

It reveals why Christmas 2023 is a great opportunity for UK businesses, despite the economic climate we're all operating in. The main meat of the guide reveals how to **plan the perfect Christmas campaign**, covering the steps you should follow in detail. We've also included an **October to December monthly planner** so you can build your campaign around key dates.



Christmas insights.

4.7 million adults in Britain intend to spend more on Christmas presents this year.

Summer may have only just ended, but for many businesses, planning Christmas 2023 campaigns is already underway.

This year, with the cost of living crisis having now lasted a good 18 months or so you could be forgiven for thinking that consumers are taking a relatively cautious approach to spending on Christmas.

However, new TGI data reveals that a similar proportion of adults intend to spend more this year on Christmas presents than last year. (Source: GB TGI June 2023)



planning the perfect campaign.

Planning your advertising activity is never easy but it's important to have a schedule in place if you want to make the most of the available opportunities. Here's are the steps we recommend you follow.

01. create your timeline.

Look at our winter 2023 planner and identify the key dates and events which you can weave your campaigns around, then create a quick timeline which includes them all. Don't forget to include your own business-related dates and deadlines.

02. identify your objectives.

What do you want to achieve this festive season? Dig out last year's numbers and use them to set goals for this year, then make sure everyone in your business is fully aligned with them.

03. understand your audience.

Ask yourself how well you know your ideal customers. To create successful campaigns, you need to understand them inside and out. Research your current customers and identify behavioural trends, then create content and messages that appeal to them.

04. choose your channels.

Decide which channels you'll use to carry your ad campaign. There are many online solutions and different paths to market, but for most campaigns we'd recommend a mix of the following:

- digital display advertising
- content marketing (sponsored online articles)
- pay per click advertising
- hyperlocal/community marketing

05. fix your offers and incentives.

If you want to stand out from the crowd then compelling promotional offers are essential. You could offer free p&p and guaranteed delivery by Christmas Day, for example. Try and create a sense of urgency in your message!

06. review your results.

It's important that you continually analyse the performance of your campaigns. You should do this while the campaign is live so you can make tweaks and changes. The results will help you evolve your strategy and plan for even better future campaigns.





planning the perfect Christmas campaign.

If you haven't yet started planning your Christmas 2023 campaign then don't worry – there's still time.

While consumers do start buying gifts and planning their Christmas activities as early as September, it's really November and the arrival of **Black Friday** (Nov 24th this year) when festive activity shifts into high gear.

Ideally you should aim to have your campaign up and running by October at the very latest. If that sounds challenging then our steps on how to plan a successful Christmas campaign will help.

Not all of the advice is applicable to every business, but hopefully you'll find lots of useful guidance that will save you time, money and possibly your wits!



create your timeline.

The first thing to do is look at the calendar and plan your countdown to Christmas.

And don't just concentrate on December and Christmas week – there are a number of key dates between now and then which you can weave your campaign around.

Create a quick timeline which includes all of these key dates. To help you plan proactively and stay on track, we've outlined the most important Christmas dates here.

For more help in this area, take a look at the year-end marketing planner further on in this guide where we've provided a detailed planner covering the months October through to December.

Fri 20 Oct	Black Friday Deal searches rise
Fri 3 Nov	Christmas Party searches rise
Fri 24 Nov	Black Friday
Mon 27 Nov	Cyber Monday
Sat 02 Dec	Small Business Saturday
Fri 08 Dec	Christmas Jumper Day
Wed 22 Dec	Winter Solstice
Sun 24 Dec	Christmas Eve
Mon 25 Dec	Christmas Day
Tue 26 Dec	Boxing Day
Sun 31 Dec	New Year's Eve
Mon 01 Jan	New Year's Day

Don't forget to include your own business-related dates.
If you're a retailer, this could be your last shipping date or your promotional deadlines.





identify your objectives.

The next step is to define your overall objectives.
What do you want to achieve this Christmas season?

This may seem obvious. If you're a retailer, you'll want to increase sales. If you're a restaurant, you'll want more bookings. If you're an attraction, you'll want more footfall. You don't need a guide to tell you this.

But it's really helpful (and indeed highly motivating) if you benchmark your performance. Dig out last year's numbers and use them to set a goal for this festive season. Can you do better? Well, remember that living costs are rising right now, so you'll need to factor this in and set realistic goals.

Once you've identified your objectives and defined your goals, make sure everyone involved in the campaign is aware of them and fully aligned.

understand your audience.

Once you have your objectives nailed down, it's time to turn to your target audience.

Ask yourself how well you know your ideal customers. To create a successful Christmas campaign you need to understand them inside and out. One of the best ways of doing this is to map out your own perfect customers by building personas. It's fun to do and you might be surprised by what you find.

01. research your current customers.

Ask what job they have, what a typical day looks like for them, their likes, their challenges. This could be in the form of a survey.

02. identify behavioural trends.

Look through your database to uncover trends about how certain leads or customers find and consume your content.

03. look at your analytics.

Take some time to look at your website and social media insights to help build up a picture of those who like your content.

04. create your first persona.

Use your research to identify patterns and commonalities from the answers and develop at least one primary persona.

Once you have created your personas, you can start to create content and messaging that appeals to your target audience. It also enables you to target or personalise your Christmas marketing for different segments of your audience.

When combined with your customer journey (i.e. how far along someone is in your sales cycle), ideal customers also allow you to plan and create highly-targeted content.



choose your channels.

Your next job is to decide which channels you'll use to carry your Christmas campaign. There are obviously many online solutions and different paths to market, but for seasonal messages we'd recommend a mix of the following solutions.

01. display advertising.

Use the ad spaces dotted around popular websites to showcase your Christmas activities, events, products and services. The technology behind digital display ads is very clever these days, allowing you to target groups based on their demographics, lifestyle and location.

02. content marketing.

Also known as native advertising or sponsored content, this is all about telling rather than selling. Think about the types of Christmas blog content (or social posts) you can create that would be useful to your customers and keep you front of mind.

03. pay per click advertising.

PPC displays your message in front of customers as they are searching online for products and services you offer. This is particularly useful if you use e-commerce as the ads can be linked to Christmas items in your shop, meaning that someone can search and buy from you in just a few short clicks.

04. hyper-local marketing.

Use a platform like InYourArea to connect your business with local communities at a postcode level. If you know where your ideal customers live then this can be a clever, cost-effective way of sharing details of your Christmas offering.

As Christmas is such a peak-selling season, we would generally advise against trying anything radically new at this time. Stick to the channels that have delivered results for you in the past, but try and refine and optimise the outputs wherever possible.





add sparkle to your socials.

In the run-up to Christmas it's important to give your social media channels a festive makeover, as people will be checking them for sales, deals, and to see how your business responds to the most wonderful time of year.

Try and create a social buzz for your business with some of the following tactics:

- Create a series of 'advent' posts
- Share your seasonal offers
- Run a Christmas competition
- Conduct a poll for your followers
- Piggyback on seasonal #hashtag days
- Have a little fun – it's Christmas after all

You should also update your social channels with a strong festive theme – ideally one that is aligned with your Christmas creatives. Try and make everything as joined up as possible.



create your Christmas message.

Now that you've identified your objectives, audience and channels, it's time to get creative and craft your overall campaign message.

Don't worry if the idea of suddenly becoming super-creative in your lunchtime is daunting, as you should always aim to keep your message simple. Avoid making your message too complex as this may water down the overall impact.

Ideally your message should address the needs of your audience while also showing how you deliver value and, crucially, how you differ from your competitors.

For the creatives you'll use to deliver your message, choose a simple colour palette that's aligned with your branding. So if you have red in your logo, use red as an accent colour throughout your imagery. This is a simple trick to make your content look consistent and professional.

With colours schemes it's worth remembering that you don't want to blend in and go unnoticed, but at the same time you should avoid standing out too much as this could produce a negative response. Try and find that middle ground.

It's important that you always enhance your ads with suitable visual elements. If you're not in a position to photograph your own images then look online as there are a number of royalty-free image archives you can make use of (such as [pixabay.com](https://www.pixabay.com) and [pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com)).

There's no need to start from scratch every Christmas. If it delivered results, don't be afraid to repurpose last year's creative content and use it for your 2023 activities.



fix your festive offers.

If you want to stand out then a strong festive offer is essential.

You've probably already considered a Black Friday or Christmas sales promotion, but are there any other incentives you can add to make it truly irresistible?

If you're a retailer, perhaps you could add in free shipping and guaranteed delivery by the 24th (to rescue those last-minute shoppers), or throw in free gift-wrapping? If you're in hospitality, maybe you could promise a free bottle of wine or dessert?

Wherever possible, try and create a sense of urgency in your message to compel people to respond quickly for fear of missing out on something really great. Maybe it's a 48-hour limited-time deal, or a sales promotion with a strict end date.

When creating your ads be sure to give prominence to your offers and incentives, as it's these that will stop people scrolling. Also have a look at what incentives your closest competitors are offering – there could be an idea you can borrow or adapt.



plan your post-Christmas activity.

The temptation may be to kick off your campaign in September or October and then just let it run until Christmas.

We would always recommend extending your campaign beyond the 25th to capitalise on Boxing Day and January sales.

This tactic will help you squeeze that extra bit of revenue from your activities, particularly as the post-Christmas market is a little less crowded.

If you're feeling proactive you could also start the ball rolling on your 2024 marketing activity! Here are some of the key Q1 dates:

Mon 01 Jan	New Year's Day
Tue 02 Jan	Bank Holiday (Scotland)
Mon 15 Jan	Blue Monday
Thu 25 Jan	Burns Night
Fri 26 Jan	#FunAtWorkDay
Fri 05 Feb	National Apprenticeship Week
Fri 10 Feb	Chinese New Year
Tue 13 Feb	Shrove Tuesday
Wed 14 Feb	Valentine's Day
Fri 01 Mar	St David's Day
Fri 08 Mar	#InternationalWomensDay
Sun 10 Mar	Mother's Day
Tue 12 Mar	Ramadan begins
Sun 17 Mar	St Patrick's Day
Wed 20 Mar	Spring begins





review your results.

It's important that you continually analyse the performance of your Christmas campaign. You should do this while the campaign is live so you can make tweaks and changes.

Be flexible and get ready to make changes. If a channel is not performing as well as you'd hoped, could that budget be used better elsewhere? Could your audience targeting be further optimised?

Once the campaign has wrapped, review your chosen metrics and determine whether or not it was a success by asking yourself the following questions:

- Did you meet the overall objective you set?
- Were you able to hit your campaign goals?
- Did your incentives generate the expected uplift?
- Was feedback from your customers positive?

The answers will help you evolve your strategy and plan for an even better campaign for Christmas 2024!

year-end marketing planner.

Our handy planner provides all of the key dates, events and insights you need to plan your 2023 year-end marketing.

Included are the main holidays and observances that take place during October, November and December, plus:

search marketing trends | find out when online searches relating to your sector start to increase and peak.

sporting events | pinpoint the big national and international sporting fixtures which you can plan your activities around.

#hashtag days/events | discover quirky events which you can piggyback on and have fun with on your social channels.

We also reveal how to plan a successful advertising campaign, outlining the steps you should follow and the decisions you need to make.

Our hope is that this marketing planner will help you stay on track, organise your festive messaging and offers well in advance, and overall make this a successful year-end period.



oct

2023

To do in October...

With 1 in 5 people starting their Xmas shopping in October, retailers should ensure that their festive campaigns are up and running. Online searches for Black Friday deals also start to rise, so if you're taking part, now is the time to start teasing your offering.

mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun
25	26	27	28	29	30	1 #World VegetarianDay #Grandparents Day
2	3 #BuyBritishDay	4 #WorldAnimal Day #VodkaDay	5 #WorldTeachers Day	6 Air Flight searches rise #WorldSmileDay	7 #National BookshopDay	8
9	10 #WorldMental HealthDay	11 Christmas Gift searches rise	12 #WorldSightDay	13 #WorldEggDay	14 Flu searches peak	15
16 #WorldFoodDay	17	18	19 Pumpkin searches rise #WorldValues Day	20 Black Friday Deal searches rise	21 #BackToThe FutureDay #AppleDay	22
23 Halloween Costume searches rise	24	25 #WorldPastaDay	26 Pumpkin searches peak	27	28 Baking related searches peak	29 Daylight Saving Time ends Movember searches peak
30	31 Halloween	1	2	3	4	5



nov

2023

To do in November...

1 in 3 people will buy their Xmas gifts this month. Searches for festive meals and parties rise sharply.

mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun
30	31	1 #WorldVeganDay #StressAwarenessDay	2 Firework & Bonfire searches peak #StoutDay	3 Christmas Party searches rise #SandwichDay	4 #RoastDinnerDay	5 Guy Fawkes Day
6	7	8 #CappuccinoDay	9 Click & Collect searches rise	10	11 Remembrance Day	12 Diwali Festival
13 #WorldKindnessDay	14 #WorldDiabetesDay	15	16 #FastFoodDay	17 #InternationalStudentsDay	18 Rewards & Directory searches rise	19 #InternationalMensDay
20 Black Friday Deal searches peak	21 Coat & Jacket searches peak #WorldTelevisionDay	22 #GoForARideDay	23 Christmas Meal searches peak	24 Black Friday #UniqueTalentDay	25 UK Snooker Championship begins	26 Jewellery searches peak ICC Men's Cricket World Cup final
27 Cyber Monday	28	29 Wine & Champagne searches rise	30 St Andrew's Day	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10

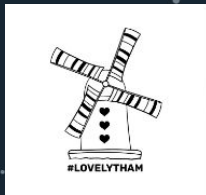
dec

2023

To do in December...

Capitalise on Small Business Saturday (2nd) if you can. Interest in party food and drink will be strong all month, peaking during the week leading up to the 25th.

mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun
27	28	29	30	1	2 Small Business Saturday	3 Advent begins
4 Christmas Gift searches peak	5 #International VolunteerDay	6	7 Hanukkah begins Personalised Christmas Card searches peak	8 #BrownieDay #Christmas JumperDay	9 Christmas Party searches peak	10 Christmas Dress searches peak
11 #GreenMonday	12	13 #NationalHot ChocolateDay	14 Hamper searches peak	15 Hanukkah ends	16 Cocktail searches peak	17
18 Alcoholic Spirits searches peak Click & Collect searches peak	19 Wine & Champagne searches peak	20	21 Winter begins	22 Winter solstice (shortest day) Christmas Food searches peak	23	24 Christmas Eve
25 Christmas Day	26 Boxing Day King George VI Chase	27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve
1	2	3	4	5	6	7



Katrina Copsey
Account Manager | North-West Region

katrina.copsey@reachplc.com
07384 459309

reachsolutions.co.uk

