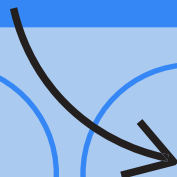


90 Days to Peak Season Success



*Your Blueprint for Full-Funnel
Holiday Growth*

It's no secret: the Q4 holiday season, encompassing Black Friday, Cyber Monday, (BFCM) and the weeks leading to the end of the year, is a make-or-break moment for brands. And just like tentpole events throughout the year, winning the holidays isn't about luck or a well-timed deal. It's about proactive planning, full-funnel readiness, and omnichannel cohesion across media, content, and commerce.

This is your 90-day roadmap to holiday success: from initial strategic alignment to real-time execution. Whether you're a seasoned holiday marketer or building your first Q4 playbook, this guide is your blueprint for converting high-intent shoppers, maximizing momentum, and driving measurable growth all the way into the new year.

It's worth noting, that while our guide begins with planning 90 days out, when it comes to launch timing, that can vary significantly by industry. For example, beauty brands typically kick off holiday campaigns in early October, while fashion brands often wait until early November, and crafting or DIY-focused brands can launch much earlier, in the summertime months.

 **Pro Tip: No matter what industry, a lead in and launch sometime ahead of Black Friday/Cyber Monday is critical, as consumers are in the shopping mindset a few weeks prior.**

If staying ahead of the curve – and your competitors! – is a priority, conduct a competitive analysis of previous years to identify ideal launch windows. Google Trends is a helpful tool for pinpointing when consumers begin searching for holiday gifts, and most social platforms offer insights tools that reveal spikes in engagement during peak shopping periods.

90 Days Out: Align Strategy, Build Budgets & Inventory Plan

The countdown to Black Friday/Cyber Monday starts well before November. At 90 days out, which falls on August 30th this year, it's time to establish goals, plan budgets, and ensure operations are ready to scale.

Key Actions:

01. Analyze Macro Trends & Consumer Behavior Shifts

- Review category-level trends using tools like Google Trends, social listening platforms, Helium 10, Analytic Index, or Amazon Brand Analytics Top Search Terms to identify growing or waning product demand.
- Factor in macroeconomic indicators (inflation, consumer sentiment) and shopper behavior shifts (value-conscious buying, earlier gift shopping).
- Cross-reference Amazon and Google search term data with Google Trends to uncover seasonal breakout keywords and align promo timing accordingly.

02. Align on Business Goals & Product Strategy

- Identify deal products based on sell-through, visibility, or inventory-clearing goals.
- Define discount structures and promo calendar (Lightning Deals, Coupons, etc.) based on historical performance and strategic priorities.
- Leverage historical Q4 and 2025 tentpole event learnings. Dive into past data to determine if previous strategy paid off and what inventory gaps or ad types performed best.
- If you're unsure on whether a new initiative or strategy will work, take the time to test it before the holiday season kicks off. Many brands use September as a month to test.

03. Plan Inventory for Peak Demand

- Confirm Retail Media Network deal deadlines (typically mid-to-late October) and plan as not to miss critical dates.
- Review forecasted demand and adjust inbound shipments accordingly to avoid stockouts or missed deal eligibility.

04. Develop Tactical Media Campaign Strategy

- Create your audience strategy to reach consumers aligned with your overall business and seasonal goals. Make sure to include relevant audiences from previous tentpole events and the last holiday season.
- Build budget models across phases.
- Allocate spend and budget flighting for pre-event awareness, event-day conversions, and post-event retargeting.
- Include a slush fund for agile deployment toward top performers or last-minute opportunities.

05. Start Storefront & Social Calendar Planning

- Draft multiple Amazon Storefront versions or DTC landing pages: pre-holiday, Black Friday/Cyber Monday live, and post-event retargeting.
- Coordinate a social media calendar to tease promotions, showcase products, and align influencer content with strategy.
- Identify what tools will be used to measure the impact of your media such as lift studies, Amazon attribution tags, AMC and more.
- Integrate external traffic planning: Amazon Attribution and AMC setup now will ensure you can measure off-platform performance throughout the holiday.

 **Pro Tip: Use social media to prime audiences early. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok are key for teasing deals, introducing giftable products, and building retargeting audiences well before Black Friday arrives.**

60 Days Out: SEO, Content, and Creative Execution

With holiday timelines and deliverables becoming clearer, 60 days out (September 29 this year!) is the time to make your product content bulletproof and to start creative development across all channels.

Key Actions:

01. Optimize Website Copy, Landing Pages, PDPs, & Variations

- Audit website copy, and on Amazon, audit titles, bullets, and descriptions for clarity, seasonal relevance, and keyword impact. Review backend search terms and ensure there is no duplication, only unique and highly relevant keywords.
- Use review insights to revise copy and visuals. For example, if reviews note unclear pack size, highlight it in both title and imagery.
- Ensure variations are properly maintained to support effective product discovery and a seamless user experience.

02. Execute SEO & A+ Content Enhancements

- Refresh website and A+ content with giftable (where applicable) and holiday-themed visuals and messaging.
- Update DTC website, Amazon Brand Story and Amazon Store with gift guides, category links, and SEO-friendly navigation.

03. Develop Paid & Organic Creative

- Build different assets (video, image, carousel) for Sponsored Brands, DSP, paid social, and PMAX.
- Plan creative backup sets with alternative ASINs/SKUs in case of stockouts.
- Incorporate influencer-style video content that showcases products in use — this consistently performs across social and Amazon.

04. Coordinate Social & Influencer Strategy

- Identify creators to partner with and begin briefing them for lead-in content (gift lists, seasonal roundups).
- Use early social posts to test messaging and creative hooks that can translate to high-performing ads.
- Start integrating PDP links into Linktree/Linkin.bio tools and apply UTM tagging with Attribution for clear ROI tracking.

05. Confirm Audio Placements

- Now is the time to lock in Podcast partner placements to ensure inventory availability - you don't want to miss out!

45-30 Days Out: Paid Media Activation & Top of Funnel Launch

This window is all about paid media execution. From building campaigns to launching awareness-driving tactics, this is when the engine turns on.

Key Actions:

01. Finalize Keyword Strategy

- Use learnings from last Q4 and other tentpole moments to finalize high-performing keywords for both branded and non-branded campaigns.
- Focus and expand on top-converting terms.

02. Launch Campaign Shells

- Create campaign skeletons with placeholder budgets to enable agile pivots on event day.
- Develop RMN competitor and conquering campaigns now to avoid last-minute approval issues.

 **Strategic Sync: Use paid social and DSP in tandem. Build awareness and mid-funnel engagement now, and retarget during the deal window for maximum ROAS.**

03. Activate Top-of-Funnel

- Launch video DSP ads and social teaser campaigns 3–4 weeks out.
- Coordinate with influencers to begin posting unboxings, countdowns, or “early access” gift guides.
- Build AMC audiences based on past engagers and social clickers who haven’t yet converted. When social or external traffic is routed to your Amazon Brand Store (not PDPs), AMC can track shopper behaviors and help you build nuanced audiences like:
 - High dwell time, no conversion; indicates interest but hesitation
 - Repeat purchasers with seasonal buying patterns; ideal for loyalty and cross-sell campaigns

Brands can use these segments to inform retargeting through DSP and Sponsored Display, with tailored creative based on audience intent.

- Launch audio ads now so listeners can hear the ad, remember the ad, and take an action prior to BFCM

14–21 Days Out: Final Prep, Publishing, & Scheduling

With deal windows and creative finalizations in sight, it’s time to hit “schedule.”

Key Actions:

01. Schedule Store, Campaigns, & Creative

- Publish all storefront versions and creative at least two weeks before go-live.
- Double-check that deal messaging complies with platform guidelines and all assets are approved.

02. Finalize Social & Influencer Posts

- Ensure all “sale is coming” messaging transitions into “live now” content.
- Schedule day-of promo reminders, last-chance countdowns, and high-urgency creative refreshes for paid search and organic social.

 **Quick Win: Schedule email reminders, social stories, and influencer posts for the first and final 12 hours of the deal window – these are critical conversion moments.**

03. Prep Your Team & Performance Tools for Holiday Operations

- Create centralized and shared documentation: Maintain shared budget trackers, campaign pacing dashboards, performance logs, and predefined trigger points for quick decision-making.
- Define and Set team roles and checkpoints — Assign clear responsibilities such as who's tracking organic rank movements, who's monitoring and troubleshooting PDP suppressions, watching competitive ASINs, or overseeing deal activations. For paid search, teams can check hour of day budget alerts and review auction insights to know if competitors are making a huge shift.
- Set Escalation Protocols: Know who makes the final call when changes are needed like budget shifts, creative swaps, or keyword reallocations.

Holiday Sale Days (BFCM & Beyond): Execute & Optimize in Real-Time

It's go time. From Black Friday to Cyber Monday and into the 12 Days of Christmas, the playbook now shifts to agile execution.

Key Actions:

01. Flight Your Budget Intelligently

- Front-load Day 1 mornings, when shoppers are ready and motivated.
- Allocate a final budget surge to Day 2 evenings (or the last day of your sale) to capture lagging buyers.
- Spread spend across deal days if running extended promos through Green Monday or other late-season pushes.

02. Monitor, Pivot, & Scale

- Watch ASIN/SKU performances hour by hour.
- Take competitors screenshots for review.
- Redirect slush funds toward outperforming products or new conquering opportunities.
- Monitor your social platforms in parallel — promote "last chance" messaging and use creator "must-haves" to boost urgency.

03. Track Content & Inventory Issues

- Be ready to react to Buy Box losses, variation breaks, or PDP suppressions.
- Shorten retargeting windows to 3–7 days to capture high-intent visitors post-click.

Post-Holiday: Retarget, Learn, & Launch into the Future

Once the rush of sales are over, the real brand-building work begins. With the right strategy, brands can extend holiday momentum into long-term customer value and loyalty through CRM, Subscribe & Save, Remarketing flows and more. This shifts the mindset from a Q4 blitz to customer lifetime value, turning one-time gift buyers into repeat, loyal customers.

Key Actions:

01. Retarget Missed Opportunities

- Use AMC, DSP and social to reach shoppers who viewed but didn't buy — or who engaged with social content but didn't convert.
- Keep visibility high in January when CPCs dip and others pause spend. Don't underestimate consumers who have gift cards they may want to spend!

02. Analyze, Refine, & Build Toward Q1

- Review what worked: Which ASINs/SKUs, creatives, channels, and audiences drove the most value?
- Apply insights to shape New Year, New You, Valentine's Day and Spring product pushes.
- Repurpose top-performing social and influencer content into evergreen placements.
- Use the momentum, data, and creative learnings from Q4 to refine your always-on brand strategy and creative messaging.
- Optimize your DTC and Amazon storefronts to better support cross-sell, brand engagement, and loyalty-building experiences.

 **Post-Sale Social Strategy: Use January for “what I got for the holidays” UGC to spark FOMO and remind audiences of what they missed, and what they might want next.**

Holiday Readiness Isn't a Moment, It's a Movement

Winning the holiday season takes more than good discounts and pretty packaging. It requires a layered, omnichannel strategy that begins months in advance and continues long after the snow settles.

Brands that succeed treat social, SEO, media, and content as an integrated machine. They use early social signals to spark interest, create high-impact PDPs to capture demand, and activate retargeting to drive loyalty. They don't just sell: they tell stories, across every stage of the funnel.

So if you're doing it right, the holiday season isn't the end of the year. It's the launchpad for the next one.

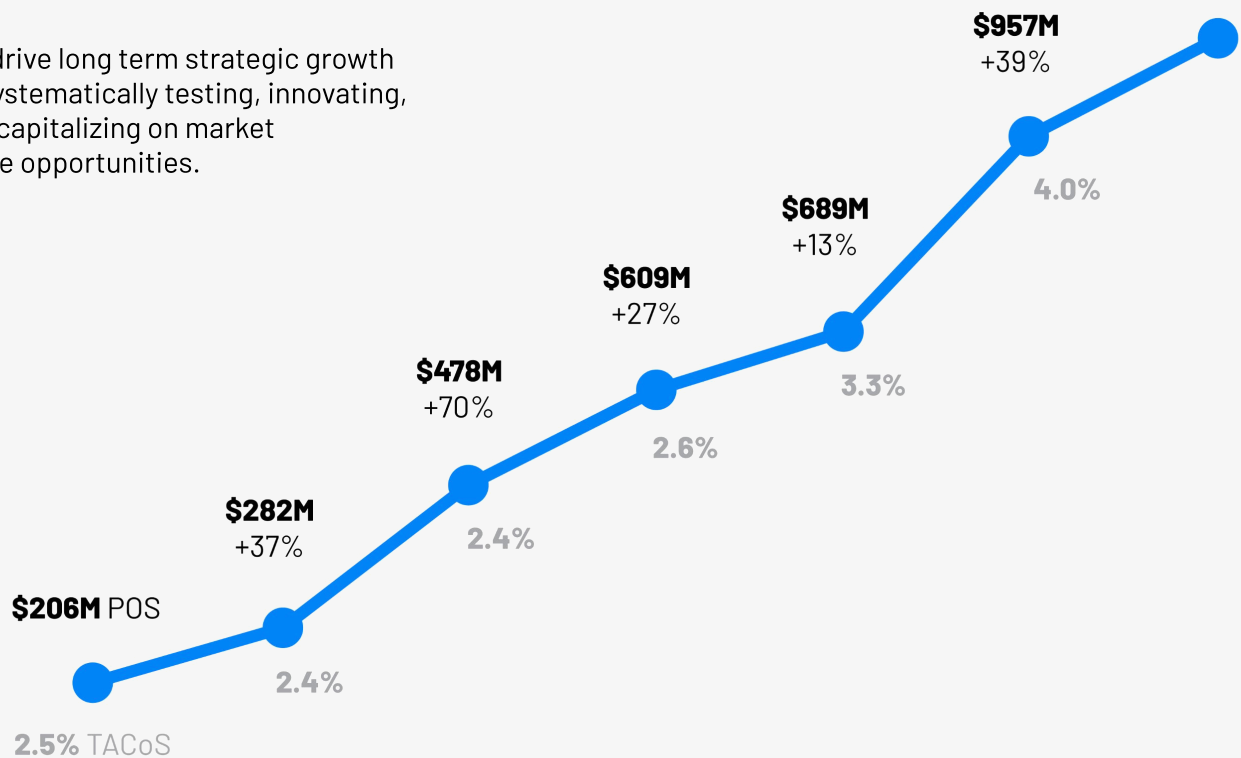
Key Dates

- August 30 - 90 days from BFCM
- September 29 - 60 days from BFCM
- October 29 - 30 days from BFCM
- November 27 - Thanksgiving
- November 28 - Black Friday
- November 29 - Small Business Saturday
- December 1 - Cyber Monday
- December 14 - 22 - Hanukkah
- December 24 - Christmas Eve
- December 25 - Christmas Day
- December 26 - Boxing Day



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