



# Holiday selling every month of the year.

PLANNING FOR HOLIDAY SELLING.





## About the author.

Gene Marks is a columnist, author, and small business owner. He writes daily for *The New York Times* newspaper and weekly for *Forbes* magazine, *The Huffington Post* website, *Inc.* magazine, *Entrepreneur.com*, *Fox Business* and *Philadelphia Magazine*.

\*Author was compensated by PayPal to write this piece.

The information in this article has been prepared by PayPal and is for informational and marketing purposes only. It does not constitute legal, financial, business or investment advice of any kind and is not a substitute for qualified professional advice.

# Year-round holiday sales.

Holiday selling isn't just for Christmas anymore.

Every quarter has at least three major holidays—that's one a month—giving you plenty to choose from.

When you ask most people what the word “holiday” conjures up for them, it's usually the same things: family, vacation, time away from work, relaxation, meals, gifts. When you ask a business owner about the holidays, it's also something more. It's opportunity. Holidays give any business, regardless of industry, the chance to bring in more customers.

If you think that the holiday season starts after Halloween and ends after New Years Day, think again. Yes, the Christmas season is the very important for retailers. In many cases, it can account for more than half of their annual sales. But does it have to be the one time of the year when you do your most sales? Of course not.

There are dozens of holidays, national events, and appreciation weeks in a calendar year—from Administration Professionals Day in April to Singles Day in China in November. Whatever business you're in, you can benefit by capitalizing on these other key selling times of the year.



PROMOTE PRODUCTS LINKED TO PARTICULAR HOLIDAYS.

Andrea Sreshta of [LuminAID](#), a provider of portable solar lights for outdoor recreation, targets campaigns around the summer holidays—particularly Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day—when people are starting to head outdoors. Another popular selling day for her: “#GivingTuesday,” the day after Cyber Monday. “It's a great opportunity to feature our Give Light, Get Light program, where customers can purchase lights for themselves and donate lights to our humanitarian aid charitable partners,” she said.



# Your holiday checklist.

As a refresher, here's a partial list of holidays and events:

## Winter

### January

New Year's Day/Chinese New Year/  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

### February

Valentine's Day/Presidents' Day/  
Black History Month

### March

St. Patrick's Day/Purim/  
Women's History Month

## Summer

### July

Independence Day/Parents Day

### August

Back to School  
(it's not technically a holiday,  
but still a sales opportunity)

### September

Labor Day/Patriot Day/  
Grandparents Day/  
Rosh Hashanah

## Spring

### April

Easter/Earth Day/  
Administrative Professionals Week

### May

Mother's Day/Memorial Day/  
Cinco de Mayo

### June

Father's Day/Graduation/  
LGBT Pride Month

## Fall

### October

Columbus Day/Halloween

### November

Thanksgiving/Black Friday/  
Small Business Saturday/Cyber Monday/  
#GivingTuesday/China Singles' Day

### December

Christmas/Chanukah/Kwanzaa

# Choose your holidays.

Choose four holidays that make the most sense for your business—but also target a holiday that might not seem like a natural fit at first.

Since you're most likely a small company with limited resources, don't overdo it. Trying to hit every holiday in a calendar year is a sure way to burn through your marketing dollars and frustrate yourself. Start small—your goal should be more about maximizing the return on your efforts. Choose just four a year—or one a quarter—it'll give you the time to get more bang from each holiday. Don't worry, you've got a lot of choices.

The holidays, national events, and awareness weeks listed on the previous page are well known and pretty much every business, retail or not, thinks about doing something around these days. So choose what you think is best, and don't be afraid to experiment with holidays that might not seem a natural fit at first.

The most important element is to develop your sales and marketing plans carefully. Like any project, the devil's in the details. Your advanced planning can make the difference between successful holiday campaigns and ones that disappoint.

See [Holiday selling every month of the year: Develop your marketing strategy](#) for tips on creating winning campaigns for each holiday sales period.



## THE RIGHT TIME TO SELL SWEET.

[Bee Raw](#), a maker and distributor of raw honey products, counts the Jewish holidays and Christmas as key selling times. According to the company's owner, Zeke Freeman, "We use every 'gift-giving' holiday as an opportunity to connect with our customers and offer them some unique gift options." He said, "For example, honey is an integral part of Rosh Hashanah, the celebration of the Jewish New Year."



# Holiday close-up.



## HALLOWEEN.

Halloween in the U.S. is big business. In 2015, consumers spent \$6.9 billion on costumes, candy, and decorations.<sup>1</sup> And its popularity is creeping into other global markets like Canada, the UK, and Asia.

Melissa O'Malley, director of cross-border trade initiatives at PayPal, offers a few ideas for small businesses that want to capitalize on the holiday. "Offer products for Halloween parties, vintage wares to decorate a haunted house, and decorations or flowers in black and orange, the holiday's traditional colors."<sup>2</sup> Of course, don't forget the opportunity to sell costume and candy supplies.



## CHINA SINGLES' DAY.

China's Singles' Day is the anti-Valentine's holiday, taking place on 11/11 (the date is a nod to the link between singles and the number one). In recent years, it's become a major shopping day, with many retailers offering Singles' Day specials or discounts.

Small businesses outside of China can also get in on the action, with the potential to reach over 360 million online shoppers.<sup>3</sup> Popular Singles' Day products include everything from cars and computers to clothing and food. For best results, think about offering deep discounts or special offers like free shipping.



## #GIVINGTUESDAY.

#GivingTuesday is an opportunity for consumers and businesses to give back to charities. It falls on the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving (November 29th this year), following Black Friday and Cyber Monday. It has gained global popularity since it started in 2012. PayPal has supported #GivingTuesday since its inception. In 2015, PayPal helped raise more than \$3.9 billion in North America alone, and the average gift was a generous \$532.<sup>4</sup>

Small businesses can participate by donating a percentage of sales for a product or product line to a charity. Make your commitment a success by advertising it through your social media. Your business can do well by doing good.

<sup>1</sup> <https://nrf.com/resources/consumer-data/halloween-headquarters>

<sup>2</sup> <http://multichannelmerchant.com/must-reads/3-holidays-easily-selling-right-now-13102015/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-11-12/can-china-teach-the-world-to-shop-on-singles-day>

<sup>4</sup> PayPal Giving Fund results for the 2015 holiday season, as determined by PayPal internal tracking.



# Plan, plan, plan.

When it comes to planning, start early and execute throughout the year.



## CREATE AN ANNUAL MARKETING PLAN.

Get out your calendar now and start building your annual marketing plan. Choose your key holidays and events, put them in the calendar, and plan backward for the number of days you think it'll take to get your sales and marketing strategy ready. Put those dates in your calendar as well. Then, make sure everyone in your organization knows these will be your big promotional events.

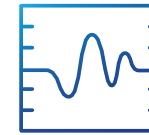
Make sure to consider your sales cycle, so you choose the right holidays based on your business. Some companies traditionally introduce new products in the fall, while others are very Christmas-oriented. Still others have very busy summer seasons. Time your holiday sales pushes accordingly.



## PLAN FOR INVENTORY NEEDS.

Make your buying plans early. If you're having a big promotion in six or nine months, talk to key suppliers and try to negotiate discounts for early purchases. Make sure to record the new inventory in your accounting system, and build alerts in case it runs short before your holiday promotion begins, so you can quickly re-order. The worst thing that can happen is to build a successful holiday campaign, bring in a lot of customers, and then run out of the things they want to buy.

If you have a sales or support team, make sure you also plan for staffing needs well in advance. Take the time to make sure they're knowledgeable about the holiday and how it ties into your business and your campaign. Then, make sure they're ready to go when your holiday campaign starts.




## LOOK CLOSELY AT CASH FLOW.

Be careful that your cash flow isn't squeezed between spending on inventory and receiving payments from customers. Review your options to understand what type of financing may be available for your business.

If you use [PayPal](#) to process your transactions, you may be eligible for a [PayPal Working Capital](#)<sup>5</sup> business loan. It can help cover shortfalls and ensure that you're running smoothly in the short term. Other options include a longer-term line of credit from a bank. Make sure all of these options are in place and ready to go before your holiday promotions begin.

<sup>5</sup> PayPal Working Capital is subject to credit approval, as determined by the lender, WebBank Member FDIC. To apply for PayPal Working Capital, your business must have a PayPal business or premier account for at least 3 months and process between \$20,000 (or, for certain qualifying business accounts, \$15,000) and \$10 million within those 3 months or within any time period less than or equal to 12 months. PayPal sales include processing on PayPal Express Checkout, PayPal Payments Standard, PayPal Payments Pro, and PayPal Here.

FIND OUT HOW PAYPAL CAN HELP  
SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS, CALL  
US AT 1-888-430-6611 OR VISIT  
PAYPAL.COM/BUSINESS.



Learn how to develop a holiday  
marketing strategy and then get your  
technology ready for holiday selling.

## PLEASE NOTE:

The information in this article has been prepared by PayPal and is for informational and marketing purposes only. It does not constitute legal, financial, business or investment advice of any kind and is not a substitute for qualified professional advice.

You should not act or refrain from acting on the basis of any content included in this article without seeking the appropriate professional advice. The contents of this article contain general information and may not reflect current developments or address your situation. PayPal disclaims all liability for actions you take or fail to take based on any content on this article.

Although the information in this article has been gathered from sources believed to be reliable, no representation is made as to its accuracy. Links and other tools are provided for informational purposes, and PayPal is not responsible for their content. This article is not an endorsement or recommendation of any third-party products or third-party services of any kind.