

**15**  
WEEKS  
OF TIPSTO HELP YOU  
**SURVIVE**  
& **THRIVE**  
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

TENTH EDITION. 5 MORE WEEKS TO GO!

## To Ring in Holiday Sales, Appeal to Shoppers' Needs



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Hey CONTACT.FIRSTNAME,

*The holiday season is a great time to get creative and be unique, but never forget the basics to great selling.*

We are in countdown mode for the big holiday sales weekend. Black Friday followed by [Small Business Saturday](#) and of course there's Cyber Monday. The National Retail Federation predicts a 3.7% increase in total holiday gift spending for 2015, but shoppers will likely surprise the experts on the method and timing of how they will spend.

Last year, shoppers waited for the discounts to kick-in. Super Saturday (or "Panic Saturday" as it's now being called), which is the Saturday

before Christmas, salvaged the holiday season for many retailers.

So you might be feeling downright cheery in early December, following the traditional launch to the holiday shopping season, or perhaps you will be disappointed because sales expectations were not met. But whether the weekend will end up being a boom or blah, small business optimism must prevail because a good chunk of the shopping season continues through December.

## **Sell But Prepare to Follow Up**

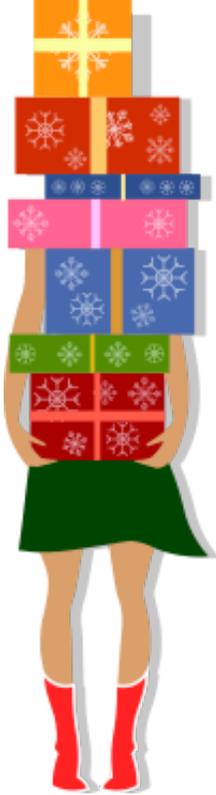
If you've been preparing for the Black Friday or Small Business Saturday blitz, here's hoping key dynamics work in your favor – good weather and cheerful and productive shoppers who want to get a significant chunk of their shopping lists done. But even if increased traffic does not translate into robust sales, obtaining the email addresses or preferred contact method of these prospective buyers needs to be a priority so you can make another run at them.

**According to the National Sales Executive Association, only 2% of sales are made on the first contact - 80% of sales are made on the fifth to twelfth contact.**

Your messages and marketing must leverage how your products or services fulfill the needs of shoppers throughout the course of the holiday season.

## **Holiday Shoppers Need What You Are Selling**

In a [RetailMeNot](#) survey conducted in December last year, more than half (56%) of Christmas shoppers said they had gifts left to purchase by the time “Panic Saturday” (this year it's December 19) was



approaching. Twenty percent had not done any shopping at all (more men than women). People said they waited because they were undecided about what to buy (43%), had to quickly reciprocate on an unexpected gift (30%), forgetful (37%) or for financial reasons 22% (looking for discounts.) I will add that the Sunday following Panic Saturday is the third busiest shopping day of the holiday season.

Your email communications, or postings on social media, can easily appeal to these last-minute, indecisive, forgetful, surprised, value shoppers. They need “the perfect” or unique gift idea, they may need it in a hurry and are looking for solutions. It’s your job to reach them, tell the story and underscore value and convenience.

Think about other ways you can add value and convenience. Customers will pay for add-ons.

- Gift wrapping service
- Delivery service
- Extended hours
- Loyalty discounts for second or third item purchased
- Appointments and personal shopper services

Happy customers are your best salespeople. These customers and your social media community can help you during the holiday shopping season. Make it easy for them to do so and provide an incentive. Offer customers a discount to post their shopping experience on social media – in real-time at your store.

Don’t forget about self-gifting, which is big during the holiday season. Shoppers are still buying things for themselves. According to the

National Retail Federation, 77% of shoppers purchased a non-gift item over the holiday weekend. Encourage these “indulgences.” After all, it will be one less thing that shoppers will need to wrap.

## Stay Cheerful and Listen

If your product or service is [on this list of what customers](#) plan to buy this holiday season, you are in luck. Of course, unique items also play big if marketed effectively. The holiday season is the time to not only sell lots of inventory, but to learn from customers. With increased traffic and interest in your store or online offerings, this time of year is a critical one for prospecting and connecting with future customers. Don't make your first contact or sale a one-time experience. Build for the future. As sales expert Jeff Gitomer says, “value the relationship more than making your quota.”

For this holiday season, keep telling yourself that shoppers and customers need you and the products or services you are selling. Reach them with messages that appeal to their needs, and use regular and appealing communications to instill and inspire action that leads to your storefront.



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