



15
WEEKS
OF TIPS

TO HELP YOU
SURVIVE
& **THRIVE**
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



FOURTEENTH EDITION. 1 MORE WEEK TO GO!

Be the One Business to Attract Anti-Shoppers This Holiday Season

The most disliked aspect of the holidays? According to a Pew Research Center survey, it's consumerism. Despite this finding, the holidays are still the biggest retail season of the year. Why? As psychologist and marketing professor, Julie Irwin, points out in the [Harvard Business Review](#), shopping patterns don't necessarily reflect ethical beliefs, however, they can if they're served up to the customer strategically.

Hi Maria,

Here are a few tips as to how you can strategically appeal to your customers this holiday season:

1

Partner with your local animal shelter and a local photographer, and host holiday pet pictures, with the proceeds of the sales going to the shelter (find a photographer willing to offer a

discount to photo costs to make it even more enticing).

2

Have a portion of your sales going to a local charity, or a known charity. Smaller non-profits may give customers more confidence that they're making a real difference.

3

Team up with local artists, makers, artisans and small businesses for a shopping event, such as a "Shop Local Fair," where everyone can set up a table and sell their merchandise. Resources such as [Etsy Local](#) can help you locate the local makers near you.

The second most disliked aspect of the holidays? According to the Pew Research Center study, it's how expensive the holidays can get. Here's how to combat that:

1

Offer to match online prices, such as Amazon.com, or, if you're an online retailer, instead of discounts to merchandise, consider offering free shipping.

2

Offer free returns. In the age of Amazon, consumers increasingly expect easy, free returns. Even if you pass that cost on to customers by slightly increasing cost of your merchandise, again, the Amazon model shows that consumers are willing to eat that cost.

3

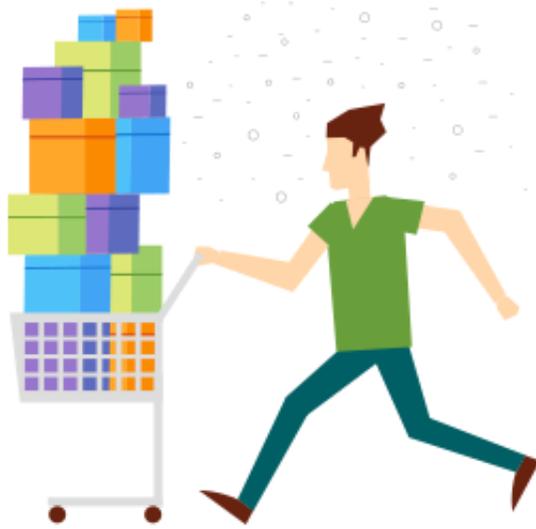
Create the "big guys" experience. While shopping small may be important to a consumer, not feeling like they're taking a risk or potentially being conned is equally important. In this case, familiarity and continuity is important. Gain consumer confidence by offering what the big guys do:

- **Be transparent** – offer clear pricing and policies.
- **Be flexible** – offer easy returns and offer product guarantees.

- **Be accessible** – establish an email address and make sure it's regularly monitored, make sure your phone lines are sufficiently staffed, and monitor your social media accounts for people with questions.
- **Accept credit cards or other digital payments** – in this day and age, most consumers don't carry cash or checks on them.
- **Mobile optimize your website** – customers expect to be able to easily navigate your website on their mobile device.

Another aspect that the Pew Research center study participants said they disliked about holiday shopping is the shopping experience. A few ways to entice new customers with a smooth experience include:

- **Offer holiday beverages and treats** – fragrant apple cider will draw people in.
- **Host a holiday coloring contest** for shoppers' children
- **Offer free gift wrapping**
- **Offer a “personal shopper” service**, where shoppers can make an appointment with an employee who can take them through the store and suggest gifts for those on the customer's shopping list
- **VIP holiday hours:** A 2013 Pew Research Center survey found that the 3rd most disliked aspect of the holidays is the shopping crowds – that's one of the reasons online shopping is getting increasingly popular. Set up special hours before and after store hours for your most loyal customers to shop away from the crowds.



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