



PREPARING FOR HOLIDAY 2017

10 tactics to help drive campaign performance during the holiday season

1

Start early – and think beyond the big ‘deal days’

Greet the season with a fully-baked strategy. Set measurable goals and have a plan in place for tracking them. When it comes to setting KPIs, consider what you ultimately want to accomplish. For example, are you aiming to drive impressions or conversions?

Benefits of starting early:

- Use Q3 and early Q4 to find your most successful keywords, which you can then feature in your holiday campaigns.
- Identify your most seasonally-relevant ASINs in order to run topical campaigns.
- Submit campaigns early so you’re not stuck waiting for approval. For reference, new Headline Search Ads and Product Display Ad campaigns may take as long as 3 business days to be approved.
- Establish KPIs and measurable goals beforehand, allowing you to optimize campaigns more effectively during the actual holiday season.

Keep in mind, the holiday season is more than just Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Adobe Insights measured 57 of 61 days exceeding \$1B in online sales in the US from the start of November through end of December 2016¹. It’s recommended that you run your campaigns through January to capture incremental traffic.

2

Ensure your retail readiness

Holiday traffic means more clicks, impressions, and sets of eyes on your Amazon product detail pages. Pre-season, take a critical look at the products you intend to promote and make sure their detail pages are set up for success.

A strong detail page includes:

- High-quality images
- Correct product titles and no typos, misspellings, or inaccurate information
- High number of reviews
- Products rated greater than 3.5 stars

Also, keep in mind that you’ll want to advertise ASINs that are in stock and meet eligibility criteria such as financial thresholds.

3

Plan your promotions

Know what discounts you’ll be offering, and coordinate early with your retail partners to make sure plans are in place for holiday.

You can boost the visibility of these holiday offers with Amazon Marketing Services:

- **Deal of the Day:** Sponsored Products ads will automatically display Deal of the Day badges in search results placements.
- **Lightning Deals and Savings and Sales Deals:** These are available for promotion via Product Display Ads, and, where applicable, will display the deal badge, promotion price, and expiry time. Once your deal has been approved, create a Product Display Ad and select the ASIN and respective deal to promote. Sponsored Products ads will automatically display a Limited Time Deal badge within search results.



- **Vendor-powered coupons (VPCs):** VPCs are available for promotion via Sponsored Products and Product Display Ads. For Sponsored Products, the coupon is automatically displayed once the VPC is available. For Product Display Ads, you have the option of promoting or not promoting the coupon when launching your campaign.

4

Bid strategically and use manual targeting

If there's ever a time to bid more aggressively, it's the holiday season.

Higher bids boost your chances of winning more competitive auctions. Consider increasing bids two weeks prior to Black Friday/Cyber Monday through the end of January, due to the expected rise in the average cost-per-click (aCPC) across all ad units.

We also recommend that you launch manual-targeted campaigns to maintain control over your conversions and gain access to Bid+.

Adjust your bids so that they are 1.5x more than average, especially if you're advertising deals (as deals will likely result in higher CTR).

5

Be at the top

Another reason to run manual-targeted campaigns during the holiday season: you gain access to Bid+. Enable Bid+ within your manual-targeted Sponsored Products campaign to help increase your chances of winning top-of-search placement.

Top-of-search represents valuable real estate, making your product more discoverable to customers who are low in the purchase funnel.

6

Test, test, test

Maximize the potential of your Headline Search and Product Display Ads by testing specific elements in Q3 and early Q4. Plan to test for a minimum of 2-3 weeks so campaigns can be optimized for peak seasons.

Consider testing these components:

- **Landing pages:** Drive to a custom landing page or create an Amazon Store if you're looking to increase sales.
- **ASINs:** Experiment with the ASINs you show in your Headline Search Ad if you want to increase CTR.
- **Images:** Try different images/logos in your Headline Search and Product Display Ads to improve CTR.
- **Headlines:** Test a thematic seasonal message against more evergreen copy to see if seasonality impacts your CTR.

7

Be cognizant of your copy

Craft clear, engaging headlines using sentence-case styling. Keep promotional copy actionable and direct.

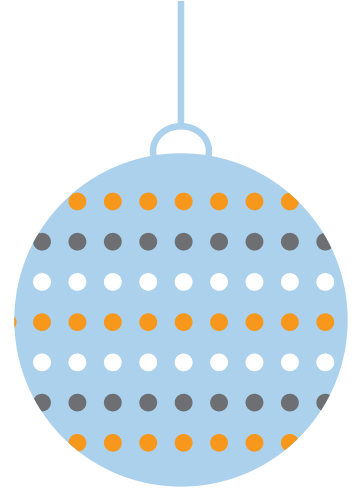
Plus, be careful to avoid the pitfalls that will delay campaign approval:

- Price callouts in copy (e.g., dollar value or a % discount)
- Time-sensitive copy (e.g., "Cyber Monday")



- Unsubstantiated claims (e.g., “World’s best phone case”)
- Superlatives (e.g., “Best Seller,” “Best,” “Highest Quality,” “Ultimate”)
- ALL CAPS or no capitalized first letter
- Misspellings and text errors

Amazon Marketing Services saw a 30%-80% lift in ad impressions in Q4 2016 compared to Q3 2016. Test early to ensure you make the most of this increase in traffic.



8

Optimize your keyword focus

Leading up to holiday, launch your campaigns with many Broad Match keywords targeting across branded, competitive, and category terms. Over the next few weeks, optimize your campaigns for the best-performing keywords and gradually shift from Broad to Phrase Match, and then from Phrase Match to Exact Match.

Once holiday officially hits, you can be confident about bidding more competitively on a set of Exact Match keywords that have proven effective at driving volume and sales.

For Sponsored Products campaigns, use the Search Term Report to help inform your decision-making and optimization efforts.

9

Don't go dark

Monitor your budget to make sure you don't run out mid-flight. You should consider raising budget caps by 150%-350% to accommodate heightened demand. For context, Amazon Marketing Services saw a 25%-75% lift in ad clicks in Q4 2016 compared to Q3 2016.

You should also plan to use a Daily Budget, which lets you track when you're running out over the course of the day.

If you use a Campaign Lifetime Budget, carry out pre-launch due diligence to get a sense of what spend should be over the course of your campaign. Post-launch, check in every day to ensure you're trending right.

Note: You can't decrease lifetime budgets. If you prefer not to disrupt an evergreen campaign, create separate campaigns unique to holiday with dedicated budgets.

10

Stay in-the-know

Don't wait until the holidays are over to assess how your campaigns performed.

Our reporting lets you see what's working in your campaigns – and lets you know where you need to optimize to hit your KPIs and help drive sales. Amazon Marketing Services saw a 75%-125% lift in ad attributed sales in Q4 2016 compared to Q3 2016, making it an important period to ensure your campaigns are tracking toward success.

To learn more, please visit: ams.amazon.com

