Over the last 10 years, holiday sales in the retail industry have increased by 4.9%. And holiday gifts are an important part of the customer experience.

One of the best ways to drive sales for the holidays is by creating a gift guide for your retail brand. But while holiday gift guides can become a powerful asset, they can also fall flat when done wrong.

Let’s dive into how to create the perfect holiday gift guide to boost sales and re-engage your customers at every major holiday of the year.

What is a holiday gift guide?

A holiday gift guide is a curated list of products to guide customers through their purchasing decisions for a specific holiday. Many people instantly think of the November and December holiday season, but gift guides can be useful for many other holidays, such as:

- Valentine’s day
- Mother’s day
- Father’s day
- St. Patrick’s day
- Easter
- Earth day
- Halloween

There are many more holidays to create gift guides for, depending on the country where you sell your products.

A holiday gift guide can be a simple landing page on your website or a PDF available as a lead magnet in exchange for an email:

6 Reasons to create a holiday gift guide

Wondering whether it’s worth the effort to create a holiday gift guide for your brand? Let’s look at the six most significant benefits you and your customers can get from it.
1. Inspire your customers with thoughtful curation

Choosing the perfect gift can be tricky for your customers — especially when they're bombarded with an endless list of choices.

The more choices you make available to customers, the longer it can take for them to make a decision. This principle is known as Hick’s Law.

Too many choices can overwhelm customers who are already under enough pressure of gift-hunting. On the other hand, a thoughtfully curated list of gifts can guide and inspire them to find the perfect item.

For example, Urban Barn has gone beyond traditional “for him”/“for her” categories, and also curated lists of gift suggestions “for hosts”, “for trendsetters”, and so on:

2. Promote products that deserve attention

A gift guide can highlight products that customers would rarely see otherwise — or that they would never have thought of looking for in the first place.
You can also use this principle to increase sales for products that you want to clear out quickly.

3. Remind customers about your brand

Do you have several past customers who haven't opened an email or purchased from you in a while? Holiday gift guides can generate interest and remind existing customers of why they fell in love with your products in the first place.

You can use a gift guide to re-engage a segment of your email list that has gone cold.

That's because the gift guide can incentivize them to open your emails again.

And anyone who doesn't open a single email from your gift guide promotion sequence can go straight to a list scrub sequence. This will help you improve your deliverability and make sure your emails don't end up in spam.

4. Boost lifetime customer value

Your gift guide won't just bring back disengaged customers — it can encourage your entire customer list to make additional purchases. This, in turn, can help you boost your lifetime customer value.

In the long run, the higher your LCV, the fewer new customers you'll need to generate to increase your revenue. And because acquiring a new customer is between five to seven times more expensive than retaining an old one, increasing your LCV is a great way to boost ROI.
5. Create share-worthy content

Your existing audience will love a gift guide. But so will new audiences.

A well-designed holiday gift guide can become a highly shareable piece of content that has the potential to go viral. That’s why magazines, online or print, still create gift guides to encourage clicks and traffic.

Not only can a gift guide help you tap into new audiences, but it can also give you an SEO boost if several other websites link back to it.

6. Grow your email list

A holiday gift guide is a great way to entice new website visitors to join your email list. You can promote your holiday gift guide like any other lead magnet, such as with a popup:

For example, you can replace your usual lead magnet with a holiday-themed one to provide a more timely reason for people to opt-in today.
9 Steps to create and promote a holiday gift guide

Convinced of the benefits of creating your own gift guide? Follow these steps to make sure you craft a successful, high-converting holiday gift guide for every holiday of the year.

1. Analyze data from sales and email marketing software

The first step to making sure your holiday gift guide converts well is to start with the right data.

What are people buying during this holiday? And what are people clicking on most from your email newsletters around that time?

Resist the urge to guess what people want to see in your gift guide.

Your data will be the most reliable way to tell what your customers' favorites are.
Make sure to involve your team in this process, too. For example, if you have a sales team, they'll have more insight into what products are trending during which holidays.

2. Pick an audience

Who will your gift guide be for?

You can create a gift guide that's designed for everyone in your audience. Alternatively, you can target a specific segment of your audience that's more likely to be interested in one category of your products.

And if you've been segmenting your email list, it'll be much easier to analyze what audience segments you have.

Alternatively, you can create a single gift guide with different product bundles inside. But we'll cover how to do this in Step 6.

3. Research product trends

Your store's data should be an important factor in how you create your holiday gift guide. But you should also look at outside trends within your niche.

If you source your products from other suppliers, don't hesitate to reach out to those
brands directly with your questions. They'll have information not just from your store, but from their other distributors as well.

Another way to discover trends is by using research tools such as Google Trends. For example, they have a report for 2022 Shopping Trends and will likely have a similar report for 2023.

You can also look at Pinterest to see what keywords about your niche and your specific holiday have a high search volume.

4. Come up with your product list

Now that you've got the data you need to make an informed decision about what goes in your holiday gift guide, it's time to make a decision.

Keep a good balance between variety and curation. Too few products will make your holiday gift guide little more than a regular sales newsletter. But too many products will overwhelm customers just as much as shopping on your website.

There's no perfect number of products to feature — it all depends on how you plan to organize them (see next step).

If you're not sure about how your customers will perceive your gift guide, you can survey a segment of your email list to get feedback before promoting the guide to everyone.
5. Choose a name and organization strategy

There are endless ways to set up and organize a gift guide. But how you organize it will define how people experience it, too.

Your gift guide's name should also be related to how you organize it. For example, Lush launched a 12 Days of Christmas gift guide with 11 limited-edition products and one year-round “surprise”:

You can organize your gift guide by:

Interests/personality:
Product category:

Hats & Headwear
- Toques
- Bucket Hats
- Caps

Fun Favourites
- Plush
- Games & Puzzles
- Socks

Age:

Price:
Gender:

Specific problems the products solve:

Recipient type (kids, parents, partner, friends, coworker, etc):
Some gift guides contain categories for each of the above, too. But remember that too many choices can overwhelm your customers.

Instead of creating a section for every possible gift category, focus on the ones that make sense for your brand and audience.

For example, don't add an Age category if your products are only designed for one age group (or for everyone). And it wouldn't make sense to add a Budget or Price category if you target high-end shoppers.

6. Bundle your products

Your holiday gift guide can contain single products in each category. But you can also bundle products together into gift sets.

Bundles benefit both you and your customers. They can increase your average order value.
while making it easy for your customers to find perfectly curated sets.

7. Build and format your gift guide

Once you know every product and bundle you want to include, it’s time to finally build your holiday gift guide.

For example, you’ll need to choose a featured image for each clickable category (if applicable). But you’ll also need to decide where to host the guide. For example, you can use:

- A dedicated landing page
- A carefully designed PDF
- A blog post
- An email newsletter

At this step, you’ll also have to decide whether your gift guide is freely available or if you want to offer it as a lead magnet. But no matter which choice you make, you should adopt a few design best practices to make your gift guide pleasant to consume:

- Optimize your gift guide for mobile devices
- Add some white space to reduce the overwhelm
- Make your call-to-action buttons stand out and easy to click on
- Use high-quality images
- Keep your gift guide on-brand

You can use Canva to design your gift guide if you plan to create a PDF.

8. Promote your gift guide

All the efforts you invest in creating your holiday gift guide will only pay off if you promote it.
Let’s look at the main methods you can use.

**Add a popup or banner on your website**

Make the most of the visitors you’re getting on your website by redirecting them to your gift guide.

If your gift guide is available freely, you can add a banner-style popup that links directly to the guide or to its categories:

But if you're using your gift guide as a lead magnet, you can create an opt-in pop-up form instead.

**Promote it on social media**

If you have an audience on social media, don't forget to promote your gift guide on those platforms.

You can adapt your gift guide to make it easily accessible directly on social media, like Betty’s Bookshelf below:
People can see what's in the gift guide without leaving Instagram. That gives the guide more shareability within the platform.

If you go this route, you can create Shoppable posts to allow users to buy directly from the app.

Alternatively, you can promote the gift guide by sending your followers to a link in your bio. This is a better option if your guide is a lead magnet (or if you want to maximize the traffic on your website).
Depending on your budget, you can use paid social media ads to increase your reach as well.

Create an email campaign

Whether your holiday gift guide is a lead magnet or not, you should promote it to your existing email subscribers — especially previous buyers.

Don’t just send a single email and call it a day, either. Not everyone will open your first email — according to Mailchimp, the average open rate for retail brands is 18.39%.

You can create an entire campaign dedicated to your gift guide by giving each email a different focus.
Here are a few examples of some emails to add to your campaign:

- An initial announcement about your holiday gift guide
- Who is this gift guide for
- Highlight a specific bundle or category in your gift guide (you can create one email for each bundle you want to highlight)
- Final reminder to access the gift guide

If you have subscriber segments that would enjoy a particular category in your bundle, consider sending personalized emails to make the guide more interesting for them.

9. Partner with other brands

You don't have to create a holiday gift guide alone. Consider partnering with other brands whose products complement yours to create a single viral gift guide.

When more than one brand comes together for a single gift guide, you'll tap into the audience of each brand to promote it. For example, if you sell bathing suits, you could partner with an accessory brand to add sandals, sunglasses, and other beach accessories to a single gift guide.
Launch your holiday gift guide to boost your sales

Now you have everything you need to plan, create, and launch your gift guide for any holiday this year. And if you're looking for a simple way to promote your holiday gift guide on your website (and use it to grow your list), look no further than Getsitecontrol.

Getsitecontrol makes it easy for anyone to create stunning popups that boost conversions. **Try it for free** to see it in action!

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