

The ultimate seasonal calendar to help plan for the year ahead

Now more than ever, it's important for retailers to have a roadmap for the year ahead. The coronavirus pandemic has presented unique challenges to retailers — altering consumer expectations, habits, and purchasing behaviour dramatically.

From Valentine's Day, right up to the holiday season, this handy infographic uses the latest consumer trends, industry insights, and digital best practices to lay out the year's key seasonal moments. Utilise this calendar to guide your approach, prioritise your next steps, and create a marketing strategy that meets your evolving business needs.

Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day has become one of the biggest opportunities of the year for digital retailers, with queries like 'same day delivery' and 'romantic restaurants' showing massive growth.

Types of Retailers
Gift and greetings, florists, fashion and apparel, as well as personalisation services.

Consumer insights
31% of Finnish online shoppers buy online due to promotions and lower prices, while 28% do so because it's more convenient than offline.¹

Audiences
Reach customers who are celebrating Valentine's Day and are actively shopping during this moment, which you can do through in-market audiences. This covers gifts and occasions categories — from flowers and chocolates to jewellery.

Easter Holiday

Easter is a time for catching up with friends and family, and sprucing up homes and gardens. Search queries reflect this, with table decor, recipes, and gifts making it a magical time.

Types of Retailers
Food and grocery, home furnishing, home and garden, and fashion and apparel.

Consumer insights
In April 2020, searches for 'groceries delivery slots' grew globally by over 300% in the first week of the month.⁴ As consumers are actively looking for ways to celebrate special moments from home this year, be transparent by providing clear and specific information about how and where they can get what they need.

Audiences
Some of the most receptive audiences during Easter include those who enjoy celebrations with family, home decor enthusiasts, cooking enthusiasts, and foodies.

Mother's Day

Online shopping makes it easy to find a truly unique gift for Mother's Day. Make sure you're up-to-date with the search terms that customers are using to find one-of-a-kind gifts.

Types of Retailers
Home and garden, gift and greeting, florists, and fashion and apparel.

Consumer insights
The current situation has moved many consumers to digital communications as well as online shopping, with 27% of Belgian and 20% of Dutch consumers saying their use of video chat and conferencing has increased since the coronavirus outbreak.⁹ Ensure your site is optimised for a positive e-commerce experience.

Audiences
Be sure to cover a range of in-market audience categories to promote your products to shoppers who are looking to buy, such as through Mother's Day shopping, flowers, and greeting cards categories. Combine this with remarketing to re-engage with customers who are likely to convert.

Father's Day

From barbecues to clothing, gift searches for dads are wide-ranging. Dads can be tough to buy for, so maybe think outside the box.

Types of Retailers
Gift and greetings, fashion and apparel, home and garden, and consumer electronics.

Consumer insights
With an increasing amount of time spent at home, consumers are turning to YouTube to learn new skills. Global watch time of how-to videos that include 'for beginners' or 'step by step' in the title saw a 65% increase in watch time year-on-year.¹⁰ Consider creating video content to re-engage with consumers and showcase your products in action as they look for new ways to entertain themselves.

Audiences
Information on consumer interests helps you to expand your advertising into relevant markets. For moments like Father's Day, which are family-centric, utilise affinity categories such as family-focused or lifestyle and hobbies to reach those who are likely interested in your products.

Summer Sales

We're making the most of our gardens more than ever now, so searches for keeping the garden glorious are at a high. Sales are up too, with many shoppers seeking bargains online.

Types of Retailers
Home and garden, fashion and apparel, and sporting goods.

Consumer insights
People accept that holidaying abroad will probably not be a viable option this summer, instead they're looking for ways to enjoy summer from home. **In the first week of May, queries for 'garden furniture' in Sweden were up 67% on 2019 figures.**¹³ Stay up-to-date with the latest Google Search trends as consumers look to entertain themselves this summer.

Audiences
For summer sales, use a mix of audience strategies, from activating key audiences such as bargain hunters, to those searching for the trending categories at this time of year. This includes home and garden, outdoor items, sports and fitness, and outdoor recreational equipment.

Back to school

Getting back to school is a busy time for kids and parents alike, with new books, clothes, stationery, and technology high on most shoppers' lists.

Types of Retailers
Consumer electronics, fashion and apparel, stationary, and educational services.

Consumer insights
It's still unclear how schools will operate in the near future. In May 2020, there was a 243% increase in searches for 'Verkkokurssit' in Finland.¹⁶ It's important to be flexible and anticipate a change in back-to-school shopping habits this year.

Audiences
Back to school is one of the busiest retail moments of the year. Connect with those actively shopping for back to school items through in-market categories like computer and hardware, as well as apparel and accessories. Use detailed demographics to engage with key audiences such as parents, teachers, and students.

Single's Day

Single's Day is an increasingly significant moment around the world. This 24-hour shopping extravaganza originated in China as a way for single people to indulge and buy themselves gifts at a reduced price. In 2019, Alibaba's Single's Day sales surpassed \$38 billion in just 24 hours.¹⁹

Types of Retailers
Fashion and apparel, beauty, and home and garden.

Consumer insights
In Belgium, staying home has led to a 15% increase in online streaming and 23% of consumers believe their use of social media will increase.²⁰ With more than 90% of Single's Day purchases made on mobile devices, ensure your campaigns are optimised for mobile and promoted across social media.²¹

Audiences
To align with relevant themes like 'self-care' and 'treating yourself', focus on in-market categories where these consumers will feature, such as shoppers and luxury shoppers.

Black Friday

Black Friday is a great opportunity to build brand awareness in the months before the peak holiday season, while also testing new tactics and growth opportunities. Get an early start, and set your campaigns up for success this holiday season.

Types of Retailers
Consumer electronics, fashion and apparel, and educational services.

Consumer insights
In 2019, queries for 'laptop Black Friday' in the Netherlands were up 552% on 2018 figures, and started to rise two weeks before the moment.²⁴

Audiences
Combine multiple audience strategies to make the most of Black Friday. Reach certain demographics like technology enthusiasts and bargain hunters, and simultaneously create a remarketing list of previous visitors, and optimise your shopping bids to re-engage your most valuable customers.

Holiday Season

The Christmas holiday period is the busiest moment of the year for most retailers. The majority of spending takes place either side of Christmas Day, as people buy gifts for loved ones and then take advantage of the post-Christmas sales. Any long-term changes in this behaviour are hard to predict, but the move to digital is assured.

Types of Retailers
Fashion and apparel, toys and games, and beauty.

Consumer insights
Last year, 53% of Christmas purchases were from a new retailer.²⁷ Given the shift to online we have witnessed this year, be prepared for online purchases to grow even further this holiday season.

Audiences
Apply seasonal event audience strategies to reach those in key categories such as gift and occasion, holiday and seasonal, and after-Christmas sales.

Source list

1. The Smart Shopper Research Kantar/ Google Survey – Finland
2. Google Trends Data, Norway, 2019
3. Google Trends Data, Sweden, Feb 4 - 10 2018 - Feb 10 - 15 2019
4. Google Data, global English, April 4 to the week of April 11, 2020, vs. March 29, 2020– April 4, 2020
5. Google Trends Data, 2019
6. Google Internal Data, Denmark, 2019
7. McKinsey & Company COVID-19 Belgium Consumer Pulse 5/21–5/24/2020, n = 604, sampled and weighted to match Belgium's general population 18+ years Not using Using less / the same Just started usingUsing more / McKinsey & Company COVID-19 the Netherlands Consumer Pulse Survey 5/21–5/24/2020, n = 607, sampled to match the Netherlands general population 18+ years
8. Google Trends Data, Sweden, 2019
9. Google Trends Data, Belgium, 2019
10. Global YouTube Data, 3/1/19 - 3/31/19
11. Google Trends Data, Norway, 2019
12. Google Trends Data, Belgium, 2019
13. Google Trends Data, Sweden, Apr 28 - May 4 2019 - May 3 - 9 2020
14. Google Trends Data, Finland, May 2019-May 2020
15. Google Trends Data, Belgium, May 2019-May 2020
16. Google Trends, Finland, May 2020
17. Google Trends, Sweden, 2019
18. Google Trends, Belgium, July-September 2019
19. McKinsey China Digital Consumer Trends 2019
20. McKinsey & Company COVID-19 Belgium Consumer Pulse 5/21–5/24/2020, n = 604, sampled and weighted to match Belgium's general population 18+ years Not using Using less / the same Just started usingUsing more
21. McKinsey & Company 2018
22. McKinsey China Digital Consumer Trends 2019
23. McKinsey China Digital Consumer Trends 2019
24. Google Trends Data, Netherlands, 2018 - 2019
25. Google Trend Data, Finland, November 2019
26. Google Trend Data, Belgium, November 2019
27. Google/Ipsos, "Holiday Shopping Study", November 2019 – January 2020, Online survey, Belgium, n=3151 online Belgians 18+ who shopped for Christmas in the past two days.
28. Google/Ipsos, "Holiday Shopping Study", November 2019 – January 2020, Online survey, Finland, n=3150 online Finns 18+ who shopped for Christmas in the past two days.
29. Svensk Digital Handel, Planning to buy Christmas presents online in Sweden 2019, by purchase time