



4 STRATEGIES FOR SEASONAL SELLING - PLANNING FOR RETAIL CYCLES

Every product has a natural life cycle and a season where it sells best: some early buyers come at the beginning, and then the mass of buyers come. Prices peak and retailers begin running out of stock. Sales slow, and trickle down to a few last-minute shoppers.

As an online seller, it's critical you prepare for the natural retail cycles throughout the year. With some simple strategies, you can make the most of the opportunities presented by the changing seasons:

1. Keep the Flow Going

The way to maintain sales volume is to be ready for the next selling season. Phase in your new seasonal items for early shoppers while your other product line sales are winding down. You can keep the momentum going in your store and your income if you plan accordingly.

2. Make Advance Preparations

Don't wait until the holiday is upon you to get your products lined up and ready to go. You should begin pushing your promotions two to three months ahead of time, according to Lisa Suttora of <http://WhatDoISell.com>. Says Suttora, "The advantage to having your products ready several months before a holiday season is you capture the early bird buyers...You'd be amazed how many people shop months in advance of a holiday."

Another benefit of early marketing is it provides lead time for the search engines to pick up the pages for your holiday specials. Include the season or holiday name in your titles, because people are searching for those terms.

3. Use What You've Got

You don't necessarily have to change your entire product line every season. Evaluate your current product line and see what can be promoted as a seasonal item. Use your imagination—create unique gift baskets and kits. Shoppers are pressed for time and are looking for solutions, so put together product bundles to solve their holiday needs.

4. Adjust Your Website

Your web store should reflect the season—feature items that work well for the approaching holiday. Put a seasonal spin on your ads and listings. "Your sales don't have to drop," advises Suttora. "Evaluate what you're selling and how you want to position it—freshen up the look of your site. You've got a whole new group of buyers coming in [with each new season], so you want to be ready for them."

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