

Four ways online retailers can shine this holiday season

 By [Sven Hammar](#)

17 Dec 2015

It is the busiest time of the year in many retail industries and there is a substantial increase in customers looking to spend money. The National Retail Federation notes that online shoppers are expected to spend \$105 billion during the 2015 holiday season.



© ewastudio – [123RF.com](#)

The following four tips can help online retailers get the most out of the holiday season traffic boom:

1. **Check your infrastructure:** Do not become a casualty of your own success: Make sure your website infrastructure can handle all the extra holiday visitors. Inadequate hosting capabilities can cause your site to go down when there are too many people browsing your site, leading customers to other websites to buy what you are selling. Professional load testing services are an excellent option to make sure your sites will stay online with the increased traffic flow on both web and mobile platforms.

According to American Express, Cyber Monday sees a 170% increase in web traffic, while Black Friday sees a 114% increase compared to the average business day. The second and third Mondays in December and the second Tuesday in December round out the season's most heavily trafficked days. Your site infrastructure needs to have enough overhead to handle at least a 170% increase in web traffic over the average.

2. **Mobile first mentality:** In 2014, 60% of Amazon.com shoppers were using mobile devices to browse products during the holiday season. A comScore study found that 60% of all web traffic comes from mobile devices, and an upward trend is projected. It is common for websites to neglect the mobile in favour of the desktop website-so a retailer can gain a substantial competitive advantage by offering a user-friendly, fast mobile site.

Tweaking a mobile web site can be a substantial undertaking, so it is something to look at far in advance of the holiday season. Responsive web design, which generates the content display based on the screen size of the device, can streamline the web development process, making both the desktop and mobile websites functionally identical.

3. **Cut down load times:** Your site does not shine in the holiday season simply by staying online. It needs to be able to serve content to an increased number of visitors without sacrificing speed. According to KissMetrics, the typical website visitor will wait only six to 10 seconds for a web page to load before abandoning it. The longer your page takes to load, the more likely you are to lose visitors.

Retailers can shine during the holiday season by ensuring their pages load as quickly as possible. Making sure the online graphics use compressed JPG images, reducing the number of ads displayed on the page, and removing unnecessary code are all effective ways to decrease load times.

4. **Ad retargeting:** Ad retargeting is a practice that determines the placement of advertisements on websites based on a visitor's browsing history. This offers retailers a huge opportunity to bring back customers who were looking at a product, but did not actually purchase it, to complete the sale. Generally speaking, only 2% of visitors actually buy something from a website on their first visit.

The practice helps target potential customers who have already established an interest in what you are selling as opposed to using other metrics like visiting a specific site or living in a specific area. Consider purchasing retargeted ads through a service like Facebook, opposed to traditional advertising, to get the most out of your promotions budget.

Online shoppers will spend more than ever this holiday season, but they are also becoming more demanding when it comes to e-commerce web/mobile reliability, quality, speed and service. The objective is to seize that spike in potential customers while it is here. Make sure that you are one of the online retailers that shine this year.

ABOUT SVEN HAMMAR

Sven Hammar is co-founder and CEO of Apica, a provider of powerful, best-in-class technology for testing, monitoring, and optimizing the performance of cloud and mobile applications. He has decade-long experience and expertise in web performance and web optimization, e-commerce, cloud services, IT entrepreneurship and the Internet. He is also a serial entrepreneur who has founded several successful IT companies over the years.

- How to prevent ads from killing your website - 12 Dec 2016
- How to keep customers from abandoning your shopping cart - 30 Nov 2016
- Is your website ready for Black Friday? - 21 Nov 2016
- Four ways online retailers can shine this holiday season - 17 Dec 2015
- Understand your infrastructure's usage and load characteristics for online success - 27 Nov 2015

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>