

8 ways to boost your online sales during the festive season

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It's already that time of the year. Black Friday campaigns are in full swing and brands are ramping up their advertising campaigns ahead of the festive season. With spending on Internet advertising reaching R12.1bn in 2021 and commanding nearly a third of South Africa's overall ad spending, digital is a major part of the mix for nearly every brand during this crucial shopping season.



Source: www.unsplash.com

But given the tough economic climate, every brand wants to make its digital spending work as hard as possible. Success comes from knowing and understanding your customer so that you reach them at the right place at the right time with relevant messages. This, in turn, enables you to retain high value customers, keep the costs of attracting new customers down, and ultimately get superior return on ad spend (ROAS).

It's a daunting task, with businesses scrutinising every rand they spend and looking for that all-important ROI. The good news is that programmatic platforms such as Google, Spotify, Snapchat and Meta have some powerful features that can help you enhance your online customer experience, in turn helping you to boost sales.

Here are some proven tips that can help your business to maximise ROAS:

1. Invest in your Google Search and Performance Max campaigns

Search engines play an essential role in the initial stages of the customer purchase journey. According to [GWI](#), 41% of South Africans use search engines for brand and product discovery and 65% use search engines for online brand and product research. This compares to a global average of 32% and 49%. Google's Performance Max gives you access new inventory, formats and audiences across all Google channels including YouTube, Search and Discover. It's a powerful way to drive engagements.

2. Be a part of the customer's road trip or party

GWI's stats show that South Africans spend more time than the global average on audio mediums such as radio, podcasts

and music streaming. They'll be listening to even more audio during the festive season, when many people are hosting parties or taking long car journeys. A great place to reach them is on Spotify, where users with free plans receive ads every 15 minutes or so. You can even sponsor personalised play lists.

3. Look beyond Google and Meta

Google and Meta dominate digital ad spending in South Africa, but there are many other platforms that remain surprisingly popular. Depending on your audience, they might offer you the chance to reach key customer segments with less noise and competition than you face on the big two. Snapchat, for example, had 6.25 million users in South Africa as of early 2022. With Promote Place, a new objective on [Snapchat](#), you can promote your business's SnapMap profile, which is similar to a Google My Business profile. You can then target people based on their proximity to your store.

4. Don't overlook AR

Many, if not most, South African businesses are sleeping on the augmented reality (AR) features offered on social media platforms such as Snapchat, Twitter and TikTok. It is a pricier ad format, but you can bring your brand to life through an immersive experience. The market for this format is unsaturated and ad campaigns are memorable. Thus, reach and ROAS are high.

5. Leverage the power of user generated content (UGC)

UGC is a great way to build a relationship with customers by giving them a voice and letting them share first-hand brand experiences with people just like them. It shows customers that you value their feedback and also creates authenticity and trust around your brand. Authentic word-of-mouth can take place among your audience within your pages and profiles, which also helps your ad ranking in the auction.

6. Video content is the wave of the future

The [Global Digital Overview October 2022](#) shows that more than nine out of ten internet users between the ages of 16 and 64 watch video content every week. Video is a flexible, engaging medium with long and short formats, and the algorithms love it. That applies whether you advertise on Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, WeChat or TikTok. It's a win-win for both the audience and the business.

7. Meet the demand for discounts and free delivery or shipping

Audiences expect discounts and free delivery during the November and December festive season. Consider ways to make discounted prices, bundled offers, value-added services and sample products exclusively for online purchases the heroes of your campaigns.

8. Harness AI

Looking for time efficiency and lower costs? [Advantage+ Shopping Campaign](#) on Meta should be on your list of campaign options for the festive season. This campaign type enables you to harness the power of artificial intelligence. The advantages of this campaign type are that all of your audiences are in one ad set; you can use catalogues, dynamic ads and existing content from your business profile; and the cost per acquisition (CPA) is lower than your standard conversion campaign.

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