

2026 EDITION

Holiday Email Marketing Guide

The Complete Holiday Sending Calendar

25.1%

of holiday purchases come from email

20

key dates on the 2026 calendar

144,300%

potential Black Friday email ROI

Prepared by SP Marketing Experts | Scottsdale, Arizona

1-877-347-3376 | spmarketingexperts.com

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SECTION 01

Key Holidays & Scheduling Overview

The holiday season is the most profitable time of year for email marketers. Choose to promote holidays that complement your company's goals, products, and services — advertising an unrelated holiday won't generate a return. Start strategizing and sending now.



October



November



December / New Year

Holiday	2026 Date
National Breast Cancer Awareness Month	Month of October
National American Beer Day	October 27
National Internet Day	October 29
Halloween	October 31
Dia de los Muertos	November 1 – 2
Sandwich Day	November 3
National Candy Day	November 4
Veterans Day	November 11
National Entrepreneurs Day	November 17
Thanksgiving	November 26
Black Friday	November 27
Small Business Saturday	November 28
Cyber Monday	November 30
Hanukkah	December 4 – 12
National Cookie Day	December 4
Super Saturday (Last Shipping Day)	December 19
Christmas Eve	December 24
Christmas Day	December 25

Holiday	2026 Date
National Bacon Day	December 30
New Year's Eve & Day	December 31 – January 1

Holiday Sending Schedules

● Halloween

Saturday, October 31, 2026

- 1 Beginning of October: preview upcoming deals and new Halloween-themed products.
- 2 Mid-October: announce that Halloween decorating is on, with a discount on your products or services.
- 3 One week later: remind customers Halloween is approaching and offer an exclusive email-only deal.
- 4 On Halloween: send a festive greeting and a last-minute deal.

● Dia de los Muertos

Sunday, November 1 – 2, 2026

- 1 Two weeks before: highlight that the holiday is close and advertise your services or products.
- 2 One week before: remind subscribers it's around the corner and feature your products or services.
- 3 On the holiday: wish everyone a happy holiday, made personal for subscribers' friends and family.

● Veterans Day

Wednesday, November 11, 2026

- 1 One week before: send a short, personalized thank-you to veterans, alongside any deal or service you're promoting.
- 2 On Veterans Day: send a personalized thank-you note and remind subscribers of any active promotion.

● Thanksgiving Day

Thursday, November 26, 2026

- 1 On Thanksgiving: send one festive greeting card with a call-to-action about upcoming Black Friday deals, addressed to subscribers and their families.

● **Black Friday & Cyber Monday**

Friday, November 27 & Monday, November 30, 2026

- 1 Before Halloween: give subscribers a sneak preview of upcoming Black Friday and Cyber Monday deals.
- 2 One week later: organize products by offer value and set up trigger campaigns based on click-throughs.
- 3 One week later: send triggered emails featuring products subscribers clicked, with related items and a special deal.
- 4 One week later: send a gift guide featuring Black Friday deals with an early discount for subscribers.
- 5 The day before Black Friday: remind subscribers of potential savings and wish them safe, happy shopping.
- 6 On Black Friday (at midnight): summarize all deals and highlight popular products; note deals run through Cyber Monday.
- 7 The day after Black Friday: send last-minute Black Friday deals and a preview of Cyber Monday deals.
- 8 On Cyber Monday: highlight deals and offer exclusive, additional savings for subscribers.

● **Small Business Saturday**

Saturday, November 28, 2026

- 1 One week before (small businesses): share your story, founding, and customers, plus an exclusive discount for Small Business Saturday.
- 2 On Small Business Saturday: send a thank-you to customers for their loyalty, reminder of the discount, and feature top products.

● **Hanukkah**

Friday, December 4 – December 12, 2026

- 1 Start of Hanukkah: send a short, personalized “Chag Sameach!” greeting alongside any deal or service you’re promoting.
- 2 Last day of Hanukkah: send a personalized close-of-holiday message and a reminder of any active deal.

● **Super Saturday — Last Day for On-Time Shipping**

Saturday, December 19, 2026

- 1 Ten days before: highlight shipping capabilities, shipping deals, and other discounts.
- 2 One week before: send last-minute gift ideas and set up trigger campaigns based on products displayed.
- 3 A few days before: remind subscribers that time for on-time shipping is running out, with shipping deal details.
- 4 On Super Saturday: send last-chance shipping deals featuring clicked-through products; for non-openers, send a last-chance reminder featuring top sellers.

● **Christmas Eve & Christmas Day**

Thursday & Friday, December 24 – 25, 2026

- 1 On Christmas Eve or Day: send a festive greeting card addressed to subscribers personally — no promotional items or product listings recommended.
- 2 December 26 (if running extended deals): let subscribers know previous deals are still running, or introduce new promotions.

● **New Year's Eve & Day**

Thursday, December 31, 2026 & Friday, January 1, 2027

- 1 On New Year's Eve or Day: send a festive greeting card featuring upcoming sales and start-of-the-year deals.

SECTION 03

Why Email Marketing?

Email marketing is cheap, fast, and effective. On average, stores that send holiday email campaigns see roughly 25.1% of purchases originate from email.

200

email subscribers in this example

\$5

monthly email marketing cost

\$7,200+

net Black Friday return
(~144,300% ROI)

It's a cheap, fast, and effective marketing channel during the holidays and all year round.

SECTION 04

Email Acquisition Tips

New Customers vs. Existing Customer Data

Acquiring a new customer typically costs 4–10x more than retaining an existing one. Focus first on monetizing your existing database — past sales, online orders, subscription accounts, and POS or e-commerce customer lists. Send a welcome email inviting further purchases, explain what you'll send over time, and always offer an unsubscribe option.

New or growing businesses should add a subscribe option at checkout (POS or e-commerce), or a simple sign-up sheet near checkout if digital options aren't available.

New Ways to Stay in the Loop

Use social channels like Facebook and Twitter/X to promote your newsletter. Give followers a preview of your content and a holiday-specific incentive to subscribe.

Irresistible Incentives

Sign-up incentives can raise unsubscribe rates after redemption, but a holiday-season incentive is generally worthwhile. Promote free shipping or a percentage discount for new sign-ups through in-store signage and website CTAs.

More Acquisition Tips

1

Ask for referrals. Happy customers will refer friends and family if asked. Craft a message inviting subscribers to share their experience, with a holiday-themed reward. Start asking existing clients in October.

2

Offer ongoing incentives. Subscribers who signed up for a deal expect continued value — for example, an ongoing discount for active subscribers.

- 3 Capture sign-ups in person. Use a sign-up sheet at checkout, a POS opt-in feature, or a notebook in the field.
- 4 Optimize website forms. Add sign-up opportunities in footers, sidebars, and content — aim for at least 7 across the site — without interrupting the browsing experience.

Do Not Purchase Email Lists

Purchased lists are costly and risk having your account flagged for spam. Always make sure people signing up know exactly who and what they're signing up for.

Engagement Tips

Make It Personal

Personalized subject lines, content, and product selections can lift click-through and conversion by 10–14%. Consider segmenting subscriber lists by:

- 1 Zip code — surface products that ship quickly or are available for same-day pickup.
- 2 Demographics (age and gender) — tailor products and gift-guide picks to each group.
- 3 Engagement rate — give active openers early access; re-engage or prune inactive subscribers.
- 4 Past purchases — segment based on prior order history.
- 5 Purchase amount — match offers to each subscriber's typical spending range.

Use merge tags to address subscribers by name in the subject line and throughout the email.

Multi-Platform Marketing

Stay active across all relevant marketing channels so customers don't lose track of you amid competing emails, social posts, and ads. Share company news, new or featured products, and exclusive discounts consistently.

Set Up Auto Senders

- 1 Welcome emails. Engage new subscribers immediately, featuring your latest products and why they should choose you.
- 2 Incentive sign-up emails. Deliver a promised discount or incentive automatically the moment someone subscribes.
- 3 Trigger emails. Send emails based on customer actions — e.g. a special deal on products a subscriber clicked through to view.

Deals They Can't Resist

Discounts don't have to mean 50% off. Holiday shoppers often respond just as well to strong shipping offers and bundled product discounts — for example, free two-day shipping on orders over \$25–\$75, plus exclusive subscriber discounts on gift sets.

Optimize for Mobile

Roughly one in five holiday purchases can originate from an email. If campaigns aren't mobile-friendly, that share drops sharply, so make sure every email renders well on phones and test the layout before sending.

Subject Lines That Stand Out

Keep subject lines cheerful rather than serious, and keep these approaches in mind:

- 1 Use light humor or puns to bring a smile and encourage opens.
- 2 Add merge tags so subject lines address subscribers by first name.
- 3 Wish subscribers a happy holiday to show you care beyond the sale.
- 4 Lean into the emotional, family-and-friends spirit of the season.
- 5 Offer a small gift or treat, not just a discount.
- 6 Highlight quick, easy gift guides and shopping tips to reduce decision fatigue.

Re-Engagement for Non-Openers

For subscribers who miss a gift guide or deal announcement, schedule a resend with a new subject line and preheader text to recapture their attention.

About This Guide

This guide was adapted from the 2026 Holiday Email Marketing Guide published by SP Marketing Experts (Statistical Performance Marketing), a digital marketing agency and web design firm based in Scottsdale, Arizona.

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SP Marketing Experts | 1-877-347-3376 | 9903 E. Bell Rd., Suite #120-B, Scottsdale, AZ 85260