

Gifting Campaigns That Keep on Giving

5 steps to transform
your holiday marketing
into long-term success



Launch the Holiday Campaign You've Always Wanted

The holidays are an excellent opportunity to make your customers, advocates and top prospects feel valued and appreciated. While you may have done appreciation gifts in the past, it's time to modernize your strategy to truly nurture these relationships and stand out among the flood of generic holiday greetings. It's also helpful for closing out the year on a high note and setting the stage to grow your pipeline in January and beyond.



If you're launching a holiday gifting experience from scratch or simply updating your existing program, use the step-by-step guidance in this ebook to help you make your brand shine, delight your recipients and create the engagement opportunities your sales team needs for long-term success.

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STEP 1

Build and Refine Your Recipient List

Targeting the right people is key to an effective holiday campaign. To accomplish this, set clear goals for your program and determine your gift recipients accordingly. For example, do you hope to generate a certain number of new leads or customer referrals?

Determine what you hope to accomplish and align with your team early on so you can create a more targeted gifting campaign.



Instant holiday rewards

are great for thanking and inspiring goodwill with:

Existing customers

Thanking your current customers with a holiday gift is a no-brainer. If you need to narrow it down, focus on new customers who joined in the past year. Not only will it help build loyalty, it can also help with future upsell and cross-sell opportunities.

Bottom-of-the-funnel prospects

By recognizing prospects who have already short-listed or selected your product, they are more likely to buy from you before the end of the year. Targeting these people may expedite your deal closing process.

Advocates

A larger reward may be in order for customers who have gone above and beyond to support you and your brand. Nurturing these relationships is important so you can continue to count on them for referrals, case studies and customer feedback.

Middle-of-the-funnel prospects

These prospects are already actively evaluating your product, and the holidays are a great time to show off the amazing customer service they will receive once they become clients. Skip the sales pitch, and offer a small incentive to let them see how well you treat your customers.

Partners

The companies you work with closely deserve a thank you for all they do for you and your customers. Building and growing those partnerships can help you expand your reach and your offerings.

TIP

Work with sales, customer success and partner teams at your company to **identify and confirm recipients in each category.**



STEP 2

Rethink Your Gift Selection

For your holiday campaigns to find success and create the outcomes you're hoping for, you have to choose the right kind of gifts. Branded swag, food baskets and bottles of wine have traditionally been very popular options. But in today's digital and contactless world, is that really what customers and prospects want?

Offering digital gift cards in your holiday gifting campaign has numerous benefits for both your company and your recipients.

Consider each segment separately when determining gift value. A brand advocate or partner may warrant a \$50 gift, but for a prospect, \$5 or \$10 is probably more appropriate.

TIP

Include an option to donate the gift for those recipients who want to give back during the holidays or for those who may feel awkward accepting a gift or are unable to accept one.



Everyone loves getting gift cards.

NRF surveys have shown them to be the most requested gift year after year.¹ In addition, recipients are far more likely to want to receive gift cards over physical gifts when the giver is someone they don't know well, such as a vendor or business partner.²

Recipients can choose a gift they love.

Make sure your customers appreciate your gift even more by letting them pick out what they want. With a digital rewards management platform like BHN Rewards, you can offer a curated selection of gift card options. That way, they don't end up with a wine they don't like or a tote bag they won't use.

You'll save time and money.

Shipping holiday gifts can be expensive and time-consuming, especially if you choose heavy items like wine or branded items that take weeks to produce. Digital gift cards require no lead time and can be delivered instantly (for free!) by email or SMS.

It's easy to include international recipients.

Even digital gift cards are typically country-specific, so it can be difficult to make sure everyone gets a gift they can use. Find a rewards management tool that helps you solve the problem by automatically curating a selection of gifts that can be used in each recipient's country.

1. National Retail Federation, "Consumers to Spend Nearly \$900 to Celebrate the Winter Holidays," Oct. 2023. <https://nrf.com/media-center/press-releases/consumers-spend-nearly-900-celebrate-winter-holidays>

2. BHN EQ Superlative Research, March 2022, n=3,274, 18+, U.S.

Create Connections With Meaningful Emails

Digital holiday gifts have the advantage of instant delivery, but it also means you must craft an email message that will stand out in customers' inboxes.

It makes sense to use an email template that can give all your holiday messages a consistent design. Create one that's memorable, audience-appropriate and a strong showcase for your brand. Remember that your emails also need to work well on mobile devices, as well as desktops and laptops.

But for the message itself, add personalization whenever you can. Nearly two-thirds of consumers—including your prospects, customers, and partners!—say they will stay loyal to a company that offers a more personalized experience.¹ If you can't do individual messages, tailor them by audience to speak more specifically to those in the pipeline, those who are loyal advocates, and those who help your business succeed.

You don't need to emulate a flowery greeting card, though. Just make sure the message is relevant and sincere. It's best to use simple, generic expressions, such as "Happy Holidays" or "Season's Greetings," rather than holiday-specific phrases.



TIP

Make sure to **mention the gift graciously** in the subject line so recipients don't overlook or delete your email.

1. Salesforce/SurveyMonkey research, Dec. 2022, n= 5,038, 18+, U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia, Singapore

STEP 4

Set Up a Stress-Free Delivery Process

Even if you've chosen digital gifts, manually compiling recipient lists and sending individual emails with gift card codes is time-consuming. Thankfully, a digital rewards management platform can help you automate the process.

If you use a customer engagement platform such as HubSpot, Marketo, or Salesforce, find a rewards tool that will integrate seamlessly with that software. This has several advantages, including:

- Marketing tools make it easy to create segmented lists from your database.
- You can incorporate gifts directly into your marketing emails or have sales reps send them straight from a prospect's lead record.
- Data syncing allows the customer's activity log to be automatically updated to show when they claim their holiday gift.
- Rewards can be set up to deliver automatically as part of a broader holiday initiative, such as a referral or review campaign.

It also helps to use a tool that will deliver rewards from your own trusted domain. This ensures high deliverability and makes your gift more recognizable to recipients, so they don't delete it or flag it to spam.



TIP

Early December is usually a good time to send holiday rewards, before customers start their end-of-year vacations, but the best delivery date may vary based on your industry and target audience.

STEP 5

Carry Gifting Success Into the New Year

Personalized holiday gift emails are sure to get your recipients' attention and create goodwill. You want to capitalize on that, though, so you can turn the attention you've gained into engagement.

Make sure your sales reps and account managers don't forget to follow up, even if it's as simple as a message that says, "I just wanted to check in and say that I hope you will enjoy the gift we sent!" This kind of personal and direct communication is key to nurturing relationships and keeping deals on track.

You can also use this opportunity to follow up by sending recipients relevant marketing content. During the holidays and throughout January, ebooks and blog posts about emerging industry trends, planning for the new year and upcoming events and webinars are particularly appropriate.

TIP

For customers and prospects who haven't claimed their reward yet, **send reminders** so you don't miss the chance to re-engage. A digital rewards management platform can even set up automatic reminders.





Ready to Start Your Holiday Rewards Campaign?

Contact a holiday rewards expert today.

Blackhawk Network (BHN) is the leader in global branded payment technologies. We strengthen relationships between brands and their customers, employees and partners by transforming transactions into connections. Among its suite of solutions, BHN Rewards is a digital rewards management platform that puts the power of incentives to work for sales and marketing teams to improve engagement and results. It integrates with more than 25 leading CRM, marketing and employee engagement platforms, including Salesforce, HubSpot, Marketo, Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Microsoft Teams, to streamline and automate the rewarding process.

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