

Holiday Ads Miss Last-Minute Shoppers

The shopping season may start earlier, but consumers still procrastinate

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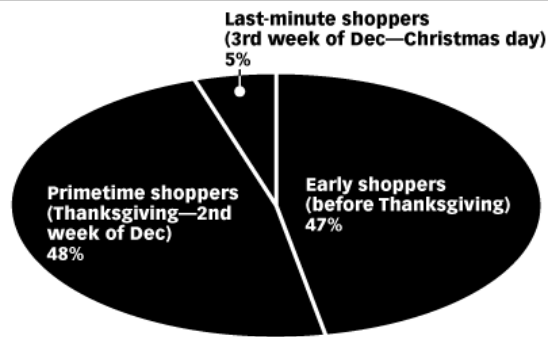
Retailers believe that early birds and primetime shoppers are the most important holiday audience. Procrastinators? Not so much.

According to a recent [Nanigans](#) survey of 100 US retail digital advertising decision-makers, 94% said they launch holiday ad campaigns by early November to **target shoppers early on in the season**. Very few introduce ads in late November (6%), and December wasn't even mentioned.

That's because only 5% of advertisers concentrate on shoppers who have left their holiday shopping for the third week of December. Instead, retailers get an early start, with close to one-third (28%) launching digital ads in September. An additional 30% start in October, and the same amount start in early November. A bulk of digital advertisers try to reach shoppers before Thanksgiving and Black Friday.

What Is the Most Important 2018 Holiday Season Audience for US Retail Digital Advertising Decision-Makers?

% of respondents



Source: Nanigans, "2018 Retail Holiday Advertising Preview" in partnership with Advertiser Perceptions, Oct 16, 2018

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The study concluded that advertisers take this approach because "competition in late December is too high," and prioritizing earlier and primetime shoppers maximizes seasonal profits.

That said, 30% of retailers surveyed are dissatisfied with their holiday ad campaign return on investment (ROI), which indicates room for improvement. Retailers may be missing out by effectively ignoring those who put off shopping until the last month of the year.

A number of studies show that consumers commonly save gift buying for the last minute.

In a [Blis](#) survey of US consumers conducted by [AYTM Market Research](#), 26.9% of respondents said they plan to do the bulk of their holiday shopping the week leading up to Christmas this year. A nearly equal number of shoppers (26.7%) use this week to finish up their gift buying, according to July 2018 findings from [Activision Blizzard](#).

And while it's seemingly human nature to put things off, many wait to buy holiday gifts to get a better deal. "The eMarketer 2018 Holiday Survey," conducted by [Bizrate Insights](#) in September 2018, found that 63% of consumers plan to shop on Free Shipping Day (December 14), the last day for free Christmas delivery.