



2009 Paid Search Holiday Checklist

12 Tips for a Successful Q4



A Holiday Checklist brought to you by ChannelAdvisor Professional Services.

The 2009 Holiday Season is quickly approaching. Use this checklist as a blueprint to start preparing your paid search program for fourth quarter success. The 12 tips outlined here will help you proactively start your planning, remind you of important Q4 paid search tasks and help you avoid missteps along the way. After the tips you'll find calendars with important dates in November and December including holidays and our projected Top 10 revenue days for this holiday season.

Before November 1

Planning

Create your events calendar.

Planning and organisation is critical when implementing effective marketing strategies. If you haven't already started prepping for this holiday season, now is the time to commit to some dates. Use the calendar system that you're most familiar with to ensure you flawlessly execute your plan this year. It doesn't matter if the calendar is integrated into your email application, a web-based calendar application or good old pen and paper, just make sure your plan is in place before November 1.

1. Add all applicable events currently on your company's overall marketing and promotions calendar.
2. Include ads you intend to launch on paid search.
3. Highlight expected top sales days (i.e. Black Friday, Cyber Monday, Green Monday, etc.).

November 1 - 25

Analysis

Complete an analysis of your budget.

Identify all campaigns that are above 50% of their targeted budget. Campaigns that fit this criteria have a high probability of hitting their budget limits during peak times in the upcoming months. Verify the ROI on these campaigns and adjust your budgets as needed.

Pull reports from Q4 last year.

Pull your top 100 non-brand keywords. You should check for full product coverage and the current position of these terms. Be sure to start bringing these terms back up to the first page.

November 27 - Last Postal Day

Ramp Up

Check competitor ads.

Review competitor ads to verify that your promotions and pricing are competitive. ChannelAdvisor customers can easily do this by pulling a Competition Watch Report.

Perform regular health checks.

Check previous day's performance and verify performance is in-line. ChannelAdvisor customers have the capability to check the current day performance via the Intraday Dashboard. This data is refreshed every 30 minutes.

Recalibrate your bidding rules.

Now is when you should reduce the period of time you use to determine the appropriate bid with your bid management strategy. Whether you are bidding via spreadsheets or with a robust Automated Bid Manager, you will want to make sure that you are looking at current data (such as the previous 3 to 7 days) when evaluating performance and determining bid and position adjustments.

Make bid adjustments.

It is very difficult for algorithms to keep up with the climbing conversion rate and ROI during Q4. Make sure you are supplementing your bid manager with manual bids when necessary. If you are far exceeding your ROI goals, it could be that your bid manager isn't keeping up with demand. Take a look at keywords that are performing well in lower positions and evaluate strategies to increase their CPC and position.

Keep an eye on your stock status.

As a retailer, you know that inventory can sell out during the Holiday Season. Make sure that you are updating your campaigns according to what you have available to sell on your site. Although it sounds pretty basic, it can be very costly to pay for visitors to land on pages that do not have available inventory.

Use any and all promotional ads.

Implement your promotional ads according to what is on your event calendar. ChannelAdvisor customers should leverage the Creative Scheduler to "pre-load" ads and have them approved in advance of their scheduled launch date and time.

Last Postal Day - Jan. 31

Ramp Down

ChannelAdvisor data shows that the Average Daily Revenue (ADR) during the last two weeks of the year is actually higher than the ADR in the month of November! Knowing this, it is very important to maximise performance each and every day especially between the Last Postal Day and December 31.

 Ramp your bids down.

Approach post-Last Postal Day bidding similar to your pre-Last Postal Day bidding. CPC and conversion rates will come down about as fast as they went up. Make sure that your bidding is aligned with your ROI metrics.

 Continue use of promotional ads.

Our data shows that click through rates remain very strong during this time, so consumers are still actively searching for products. With that said, we recommend keeping a sense of urgency in your ads and give shoppers a reason to buy NOW!

Early February

Document Wins and Losses

 Analyse your results.

Compile all the data you have from November through February. Develop insights into your wins and losses. What went well? What didn't go well? What would you have done differently? Were there unexpected results? Make sure you save this information in a location you can easily access it when preparing for the next holiday season.

November 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 Budget Analysis	3 Pull Q4-08 Reports	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Thanksgiving 	27 Black Friday	28
29	30 Cyber Monday	9				

December 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY					
		1	10	2	3	4	5				
6	7	6	8	7	9	8	10	11	12	Hanukkah Begins	
13	5	14	1	15	2	16	3	17	4	18	19
	Green Monday										
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
				Christmas Eve	Christmas Day	Boxing Day					
27	28	29	30	31							
				New Year's Eve							

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