

LYONSCG ARTICLE

# 6 Steps to Elevate the Customer Experience This Holiday Season



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Align messages across channels, make mobile shopping easy, encourage self-gifting, dynamically segment your customers and make personalized offers. And be sure to over-communicate about when a customer's holiday order is going to arrive.

Shoppers will go into the holiday season with high expectations this year. They'll want great deals, custom offers, on-time delivery, and a little something for themselves—no matter what channel they're using to work through their gift list.

To meet shoppers' rising expectations of easy and engaging shopping experiences, now's the time to review and prepare your holiday messaging, personalization, mobile optimization, shipping strategy, and self-gifting offers. Follow these simple steps to deliver an engaging and rewarding customer experience during the holidays and beyond.

## Align and time your customer messaging for all channels

To reach the 45% of shoppers who start making [holiday purchases before November 1](#), you should communicate with your customers early and often. You can engage these early shoppers, as well as last-minute buyers, by promoting your upcoming offers well before Thanksgiving and continuing strong promotions through December and into early January.

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Now's also the time to check the alignment of your planned holiday messaging across all channels. Proper alignment can [increase conversion rates by 200% or more](#) while reducing cost per converted click. Well-aligned multichannel messaging that resonates and follows the customer, based on their behavior can increase “stickiness” and create a more engaging shopping experience. All of your messaging—email, social media, website copy, advertisements, and so on—need to be aligned with active campaigns.

## Personalize your customers' lifecycle moments

Personalizing product recommendations can yield [more conversions and revenue](#) than a non-personalized shopping experience, but the possibilities go beyond product recommendations. You should plan to personalize against lifecycle moments to reach individual customers

at specific touch points along the path to purchase. For example, Customer X may need content to nurture them before they make a purchase, while Customer Y needs an extra incentive to complete end of purchase journey. This approach can amplify the impact of holiday email campaigns, which typically generate [higher conversion rates](#) than business-as-usual emails.

## Use dynamic segmentation to build out your holiday messaging

Many retailers have moved away from static segments to third-party tools that support dynamic or conditional segment targets. By setting up [dynamic segmentation](#), which uses continuously updated customer data to automatically assign individual customers to segments based on their behavior, you can reach real-time segments, save resources on manual updates, and scale your segmentation efforts – all of which are advantages during the busy holiday season.

Here's an example: combine static past purchase data with dynamic data (e.g. more frequent site visits) to build a prospect group that may be especially receptive to specific holiday offers.

## Fine-tune the mobile shopping experience for next year

[Holiday-season revenue from mobile increased 22%](#)<sup>6</sup> from 2016 to 2017, [half the orders](#) placed on Christmas Day 2017 came from smartphones, and [mobile retail is expected to grow](#) by 32% in 2018. Clearly, the convenience of mobile shopping appeals to many consumers, and a smooth mobile experience can increase your holiday traffic and revenue. However, consumers have increasingly high expectations for their mobile shopping experiences, and a poor experience can drive them away for good. Google found that shoppers who have a negative experience on a mobile site are [62% less likely to shop there again](#), regardless of the quality of the store's campaigns.

It may be too late to optimize your mobile experience for the 2018 holiday season, but you can start developing your mobile strategy budget and expectations now for 2019. To

give your mobile customers the best possible experience and encourage repeat visits, plan to optimize all elements of your shopping funnel, including an intuitive and easy browsing experience, enhanced search capabilities, and a low-friction checkout process. Optimize your product page load times for mobile as well, because customers expect them to load quickly. Google now recommends that mobile pages load in [five seconds or less](#), far faster than the 15.3-second average.

## Reduce your customers' shipping stress

Your customers are probably worried about their gifts arriving on time. In 2017, 35% of consumers surveyed said [package delays were their biggest source of holiday stress](#), far ahead of money as a stressor. Their concern is well-founded. Major carriers had already [fallen behind on deliveries](#) two weeks before Christmas in 2017, and shipping services have struggled to meet demand during the past several holiday seasons, with delivery delays making national headlines.

You can relieve some of your customers' shipping worries, reduce complaints, and avoid excessive inquiries by over-communicating fulfillment windows to your customers. Display messaging on estimated shipping windows at the point of purchase and in confirmation notices to your customers via email, text, and/or Facebook Messenger.

Another way you can use shipping to enhance customer experience is by offering your customers a menu of expedited delivery options. There's been a dramatic increase in the number of consumers who opt for same-day delivery, [up from 17% in 2017 to 31% this year](#). By offering same- or next-day fulfillment (as well as reasonably priced or free expedited shipping) you can better compete with Amazon Prime and retailers that offer same-day delivery in selected markets, such as Best Buy, Target, Macy's and Nordstrom. Same-day shipping options also encourage customer loyalty: 74% of customers surveyed by a national courier service said getting a purchase delivered the same day made them [more likely to buy more from that merchant in the future](#).

## Encourage your customers to treat themselves

Use your existing customer data, like historical purchases, purchase frequency, and recent site activity, to target self-gifting campaigns to your customers. The trend of self-gifting—consumers spending part of their holiday gift budget on items for themselves—is gaining popularity, especially [among younger shoppers](#). More than seven in 10 shoppers surveyed for the National Retail Foundation's [2017 Holiday Planning Playbook](#) said they purchased items for themselves during the past holiday season. Popular self-gifting categories include [electronics and winter apparel](#).

These elements—encouraging self-gifting, communication about shipping, improving the mobile experience, and aligning and optimizing messaging—can help you build a successful holiday season roadmap. And because consumer expectations for convenience and clear communication are always rising, continuously refining these elements will benefit your brand over the long-term, and beyond.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Danielle Savin has over 20 years of experience in e-commerce, direct marketing, and traditional and brand marketing. She has launched multiple e-commerce sites for retailers spanning a variety of verticals and categories. Danielle combines experience, vision and talent to assess business needs, develop strategy, and implement and monitor deployment. Danielle's clients have included Havaianas, World Kitchen, Wilton Brands, La Senza, Juicy Couture, Jarden Brands, KUIU, JoAnn Stores, Beats by Dre, Go Pro, Hershey's and many others. Danielle received her BA from the University of California San Diego.

## About LYONSCG

Lyons Consulting Group (LYONSCG), part of Capgemini, is a leading global commerce service provider, with capabilities that include consulting, digital agency, systems integration, technology services, and managed services. LYONSCG combines proven methodologies, deep technical expertise, and award-winning design to create digital commerce experiences that engage and convert consumers and buyers. Hundreds of leading B2C and B2B brands trust LYONSCG to realize their commerce vision and continually optimize it to drive profitable growth. For more information, go to [www.lyonscg.com](http://www.lyonscg.com).



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