

# 50 Holiday Promotional Ideas

1. Vintage aluminum and tinsel Christmas trees make ideal display racks. Instead of decorating them with ornaments, hang earrings. Replace traditional garlands with beaded necklaces. Encourage customers to buy multiple, small gifts by incorporating the theme of the twelve days of Christmas. Keep a number of less expensive items near the register for extra, last minute gift purchases.

2. **Promotions and loyalty offers.** Create a promotion or loyalty offer to entice customers back over the Christmas period. Thinking of what presents to buy can be hard work, so if you can make the decision easier for people in advance, they sure will take you up on the offer.



3. **Promote the holiday spirit.** This can be as easy as applying a seasonal theme to your website or putting up decorations in your bricks-and-mortar store. It can also involve giving away free candy canes with every purchase or arranging for the staff to wear Santa hats.

4. Retail jewelers know men well, which is why ladies' night events are scheduled in November, and "last minute shopping" men's nights are scheduled in mid-December. Many are rightly called "panic parties," but other guy-centric retailer events don't bother stating the obvious.

5. An Ohio based jeweler created a special website for its two-day customer-appreciation sale. Select items were 45 percent off, with red tag items receiving an additional 10 percent off. And any customer that spent \$100 or more received a free pair of freshwater pearl earrings. They also created an ad targeting holiday season engagement customers looking for jewelry at various price points and brands.

6. An Illinois jeweler put a little spin on the traditional finders-keepers event. First, the store gave away one-of-a-kind snowflake pendants made in-house. Secondly, the event had been given a specific seasonal theme: the Holiday Gift Hunt. Each of the 30 wrapped gift boxes contained a coupon for a pendant, which had to be redeemed at the store. Images of winners and their snowflake pendants were then uploaded on Facebook.

7. **Get people ready for the holiday season.** Let them know you're ready through marketing. This could involve taking out ads in the local newspaper or utilizing special holiday circulars or flyers.



8. Remind people of your business by distributing holiday-themed promotional items featuring your name and logo, such as a calendar for the coming year or an inexpensive Christmas tree ornament.

9. Consider sending cards or postcards to past customers as well, to remind them of your existence - you could even include a coupon or offer if they do business with you again.

10. Sending a holiday card to customers is a great low-cost strategy to promote your business. You can send paper cards or e-cards with a holiday greeting and even a photograph of you and your staff.



11. Think about strategies for enticing people to return to your shop or website, such as changing your offers on a weekly or biweekly basis. You can send a list of current deals to your customers via e-mail, including a promotion code for additional savings.



12. **Inventory.** Did you have enough last year? The Rule is: if it's in the back room and not on the floor – you're doing something wrong. Delegate this to certain individuals and then hold them firmly accountable for ensuring the sales floor is well stocked at all times. If you have merchandise on your premises (in your back room) that is not represented on your floor you are losing sales – to think otherwise is plain foolish. Hint: Make sure no one comes out of the back room empty handed. At this time of year, there is always a need for more of something on the sales floor.

13. **Holiday Deals.** This is probably one of the easiest ways to draw in consumers around the holidays. Use the holidays as an excuse to take money off a product or service. After all, if you offer a product or service at a great price, consumers will always listen.

14. **Packages.** If your business allows for bundling or a type of gift basket, the holidays are a great time to put this into motion. People are looking for gift ideas, and if they can buy everything at once they will be more apt to go with your company.

15. **Volunteer.** There are bound to be lots of fall festivals and winter events going on around the community. Look into your local recreation center and restaurants to see if there is anything you can do to get involved. This will be a good way for your company to show its support in the community as well as market the brand.



16. **Newsletters.** Consumers will be surfing the Internet looking for gift ideas or special deals. If you promise both in your newsletter, you're sure to have more sign up than ever before. Once someone gets regular newsletters from your company, you will have a better chance of getting referrals and keeping that person interested for the long haul.

17. **Create more foot traffic.** Get together with the other local stores and restaurants nearby to co-fund marketing to attract people to come to your local stores. Here are some ideas...

- Host events that feature activities for kids since that will attract their parents. Invite the local high school band to play. Get the local school dance and theater groups to perform.
- Promote photo-taking with Santa. Have people bring in their pets to have a photo taken with Santa.
- Promote Christmas carol sing-alongs. Hire leaders who will walk carolers through local stores. Stop at each store and let people shop and then move on to the next store. Get the local retailers involved.
- Christmas tree walking tour. Ask each local merchant to decorate a unique Christmas tree in their store or restaurant. Create a map to see all the trees. Invite people to vote on their favorite tree.
- Give people a reason to go into stores and restaurants they normally might not. Create a promotion with a map highlighting local stores and a special item available at each place.

18. Add value to your product by providing gift-wrapping.

19. Make it easier for shoppers by grouping items into price ranges such as "Gifts under \$10" or into categories like "gifts for the gardener" or "gifts for the handyman".



20. Provide special services such as home delivery, or product viewings for loyal and regular customers.

21. Contact customers from last Christmas, or use social media to invite new customers to see your new product range.

22. Instead of discounting, give customers a gift voucher to encourage them to return to your shop in the new year.



23. **Help customers save time.** Make it easy for stressed and time pressed shoppers this year. Create a \$15-\$20 gift table with ready-to-go pre-wrapped merchandise (complete with bows). Make sure you have an unwrapped version with each stack of pre-wrapped merchandise. Do the same for a couple of other price points such as a \$50 and \$100 tables.

24. **Get Customers back again.** An old but time tested way to help sales along during the holiday period is to give your customers a special reason to come back and buy again at a later date. For all purchases made in the month of November or before Thanksgiving, give your customers a flat percentage or dollar savings coupon to come back in December prior to Christmas. While you're at it, try the same thing during December to get shoppers back during the "after holiday" doldrums. Have your coupons printed out on special paper with some bright colors and complete with the owner or store managers signature. This also makes it look more special. Just make sure your incentive is powerful enough in dollar amount or percentage off to get your customers back to the store.

25. **Encourage customers to come in.** A simple window decoration can include a window full of ribbons hanging down from the ceiling at different lengths along with whatever you're featuring in your window. At the end of each ribbon is a miniature envelope with a discount inside. Mark each envelope is outside with large red or green question marks and the word "Savings". One or two of these cards available at the time of purchase contains a free shopping trip for up to a specified dollar amount. Each card is good for savings of some amount. Shoppers get to open one card at the register after everything is rung up, to see what their discount or freebie is.

26. **Have A Store Party!** It's not original, but it's effective. Put out some tables, some great drinks and create some special discounts for a one night only party. Promote your party in advance however you wish, but at least use shopping bag inserts, e-mails, and a large window banner. Call it a holiday "Thank You" party or whatever you think is a better name. Try it again after the holidays or possibly once a quarter so that customers get in the habit of looking for your night. You may even want to get a local DJ to help create some excitement.

27. **Bring in something or someone special.** If you are a fashion, gift, art store, sewing store, spa or salon, bring in a special guest jewelry maker and feature their items at a special price for a couple of days or nights. Don't know of a jewelry maker? Try another specialty.

28. **When are you open?** Adjust your hours of operation for your customers this season. Be open when they shop. The decisions you make about hours play a huge role in your total sales. If you are closed on either day of the weekend, you are missing out! Consider expanding your holiday hours this year.

29. **Put on a special holiday promotion.** You could offer a free glass of champagne on Christmas Eve, free taxi rides on New Year's Eve, etc. Just make sure not to offer a discount. For the holidays, people are willing to spend, so instead of a discount, offer extra service or a free item. Do not lower prices; instead, add a bit of value.





30. **Give special attention to fitting rooms.** Review your fitting rooms closely. What can you do to make the fitting room experience “much” better? Give customers the best lighting possible. Fluorescent lighting is not flattering. You want customers looking good when they try on something in your store. Insure the dressing rooms are big enough. Give customers a place to sit down, including husbands. Have a minimum of three or four hooks to hang things on. There are plenty of customers who may avoid trying on something, or cutting their purchases just over the hassle of the fitting room experience.



31. **Get some attention by turning your store into a giant present.** If you’re store is small enough, wrap the exterior of your store in a bright red ribbon about a foot wide and then add a gigantic bow in a very visible place. You’ll certainly communicate a message that you are a place to check out for the holidays, and you’ll stand out as well.

32. **Get some attention with Santa’s galore.** Dress your entire staff in Santa Costumes and contact the media for a quick news story. It will make a fun scene for customers, kids and even staff. It will also make your store memorable!

33. **Build the e-mail list, if you do nothing else.** Offer an incentive for building an e-mail list. The best way to do this is to offer a drawing for something everyone wants. Maybe it’s an Apple iPad. Or, offer a special discount or dollar off coupon to be sent to the customer’s home e-mail address, in exchange for their contact information.

34. **Make it easy for customers to create the look you’ve bought.** If you’re a fashion store, make sure the mannequins in your windows reflect a special and unique look that can be created with the fashion items in your store. Consider taking one of the basic items and promoting it or highlighting in your window with a great price. Then be sure to have all the other fashion items to mix and match with it. Be sure your inventory is well organized and grouped to make it easy for customers.



35. Take advantage of holiday traffic to move older inventory. While you may not want to emphasize it, be sure to have a clearance section. Make sure signs are very easy to see and understand. For example, “Clearance starting at \$8.00.”

36. **Help customers get more value.** Bring in some costume jewelry items to offer with a purchase to avoid discounting. The free item is a great incentive and may help someone make their gift look even better!

37. Have something to entertain bored family members who have been dragged along, for example a TV set up showing a children’s movie, or a comfy chair with some car magazines.

38. **Cover up.** Use holiday tablecloths and blankets to cover existing tables and bins throughout the store. This will serve as a reminder of the season and perpetuate the atmosphere you are trying to create throughout the store. It can be reused every year.

39. Little things mean a lot to customers at this time of year, whether it’s a free gift wrapping service or complimentary food and drink.

40. Consider offering a special three course Christmas meal with a Christmas themed menu.

41. Try and attract Christmas shoppers by promoting hot coffee and warm soup to entice them to take a break from the crowds on a cold wintry evening.



42. For restaurants, a simple card sending best wishes for the holiday season is a good way to remind customers about your restaurant. The card should seem like a greeting rather than a promotional message. Your customers will feel special and may keep you in mind for their celebration plans. At the bottom of the card, you could mention your holiday promotion, but keep it simple and enticing. For example, you could say, "One free glass of champagne for couples who dine with us on New Year's Eve."

43. On a quiet midweek night consider offering live music entertainment to persuade customers to plan another evening out.

44. **Provide gift-wrapping at your restaurant.** During down times (like 2 to 5 p.m.) offer free gift-wrapping with an entrée. Shoppers tend to take earlier dinners after skipping lunch and they'll enjoy getting something done while they eat. If you don't want to put an employee on the job, ask a local charity to do it for donations.

45. **Give the gift of easy giving.** Everybody offers gift certificates, but few do it in an appealing way. Wrap certificates of all amounts in boxes and top them with mini-gifts like wine bracelets or ornaments. Then display them everywhere and let customers know how easy it is to put them under a tree.

46. Ensure your salon is a treasure trove of stocking fillers and secret Santa-type gift ideas. Hair accessories, hair brushes, nail paints and candles will all chime with clients, particularly when priced under \$10. Display them prominently and powerfully at reception, at the styling stations and the coatroom. Experiment with attaching gift labels to a few of them to endorse their present potential.

47. **Host a holiday fund-raiser.** People feel generous during the holiday season. You can show them that you do, too, by hosting a special holiday fund-raiser. You could put on a food drive or give a percentage of sales to a certain charity. Write up a press-release about it, and make sure to mention the fund-raiser on any advertising materials that you use near the holidays.

48. **Festive Menu.** This is a must for any restaurant that is serious about attracting festive revellers. Ask your chefs to take some time in creating a number of different menus at different price points to appease the needs of all festive parties.



49. **Bounce Back Campaigns.** Consider running a bounce back campaign for all diners that visit you in December. Give them a card or collect their e-mail addresses so you can reward them with a special offer to claim back in January. After the excesses of Christmas diners are less likely to splurge out in January, so with a little bit of planning you could entice them back early in 2013.

50. **Preview Evenings.** If you are lucky enough to be running a busy bar with your restaurant why not fire out an e-mail to local businesses to invite them along to a preview evening of the holiday menu you have created. Small canapés, a few glasses of wine and staff on hand to book up the big business bookings on the spot.

