



*Whitepaper*

# Holiday Email Marketing Survival Guide

# Whitepaper

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# Holiday Email Marketing Survival Guide

Anyone who works in retail email marketing knows what Q4 means — email marketing madness. The holiday season is upon us, and email marketers everywhere are bracing for the months ahead. While many thrive on the energy and excitement of this season, others find themselves struggling to keep up with the demands.

Successful email marketing requires knowing best practices, having solid processes, and being able to execute high-quality copy and design that connects with the customer. Email marketing is an ever-evolving space, and that means keeping up with trends and new technology, plus being able to pivot when needed. In the rush of the holiday season, having the right mix of knowledge and adaptability is even more critical.

**These recommendations can help ensure a solid foundation for your email marketing this holiday season and beyond.**

## Review past holiday campaigns



Look at last year's holiday campaigns, including the copy, creative, audience, and results. What worked well? What fell flat?

If you did a post-holiday debrief with your team last year, review those notes as well. If you didn't, put one on the calendar now for after the holidays to review your campaigns and gather team feedback. An individual or team debrief can help capture where you were scrambling to catch up or how you pivoted in response to something unexpected.

What lessons can you learn from last year to apply to this year? Of course, 12 months have passed and many things have changed since then, so be sure to consider anything new when asking that question and reviewing past results.

# Know your KPIs

How do you measure success in your email program? How do you know what's working and what's not? And, more importantly, how do you explain it to your coworkers who don't do email?

Throughout the holiday season, you need to be monitoring those KPIs regularly and adjusting accordingly. Waiting until the end of the holiday push to review metrics doesn't work, because then you don't have time to adjust for better results. Knowing your KPIs also means you get to celebrate your successes during the hectic season rather than after.

You don't need a fancy dashboard to know your KPIs, though a fancy dashboard is nice if you have it. A simple spreadsheet or even daily email reports of key metrics will do to keep you and your team focused on what matters.



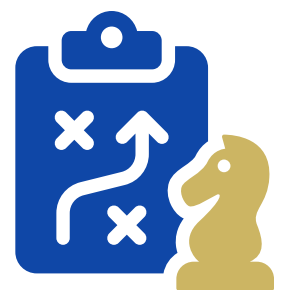
## Check your automations

Before the busy season hits, make sure your automations are good to go. Now is not the time to add lots of new triggers, but it is a good time to ensure existing triggers are running as expected.

Does your welcome series need a quick creative refresh before you see an influx of new subscribers looking for holiday deals? Are your post-purchase emails triggering correctly? Don't forget to check any out-of-stock or back-in-stock automations – those are critical this time of year.

## Make a plan, but be ready to pivot

Anyone who works in email marketing knows that emails don't just magically happen in a few minutes. Every email that sends requires many hours of effort, usually by multiple people. Someone writes the creative brief, then it goes to copywriting, then design, then testing, then quality assurance. Finally, it's approved to send, and someone sets up the audience and schedules the email.



Having a plan in place is critical to keep your email campaigns on track and keep your team from losing too much hair in the process. In an ideal world, companies start strategizing their holiday campaigns during the summer months. But it's not always an ideal world. So, start where you are now and make a plan for the holiday season ahead. Regardless of when you started planning for holiday campaigns, be ready to pivot if needed due to product shortages, shipping delays, or anything else that may impact your company.

# Check in with your team (or yourself)

The holiday season is hectic for email marketers. Days are long, stress levels are high, and emotions can quickly get out of control. Teamwork is more critical than ever, and fostering teamwork requires checking in regularly.

Try kicking off the hectic season with a team dinner or other activity that isn't focused on work. Ideally, you've already created an environment where your team connects both personally and professionally, and an extra team dinner simply builds on that foundation of trust. If you haven't put in that work yet, now is a good time to start.

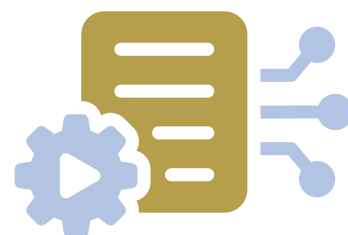
If you're the lone email marketer at your company, find some friends in the industry that you can lean on. Schedule a virtual happy hour to connect and share funny stories or survival tips for the busy season.

Whether you're part of a team or flying solo, schedule another time mid-season to check in again. Do something fun and release some of that stress together, then dive back in to finish strong.



## Tighten up your processes

How are your email processes? Do you have clear standards and processes for creative briefs, email design, testing, review/approval, and deployment?



If there are any pain points in your process, look for opportunities to fix them before you get into the mad rush of holiday emails. All too often, companies push process improvements to the back burner and forget that sometimes a relatively simple adjustment can relieve a lot of pressure.

Talk with your team about the little things related to processes that cause friction. Maybe it's that one team member who always sends the rush requests, or the missing assets when the creative team receives the project, or lack of clarity around who gives the final go-ahead to schedule the email. You probably can't fix everything right now, but ask your team to make notes on potential process improvements throughout the busy holiday season and set a meeting to start tackling the bigger things in January.

# Leverage extra support

If the holiday season feels like too much for you or your team, add extra support. Look at your KPIs, your plan, and your notes from prior years to identify where some extra support could benefit you most. Do you need better copywriting? Higher-quality design? Email coding that makes your email stand out in the inbox? Someone to implement missing automations so you can focus on holiday emails? Maybe you just need someone to review your plan and provide some quick feedback to confirm you're on the right track.

Find an agency that knows email and see where they can help alleviate some of the pressure for your team. Be sure they know email and don't just do email. There's a difference. If you need someone who can quickly get up to speed and take pressure off your team, you need an agency that truly knows email.



## Take a deep breath

Our final piece of advice: Take a deep breath. And then another. Repeat regularly throughout the busy holiday season.

While you continue taking those deep breaths, start making some notes about your past holiday email campaigns, KPIs, teamwork, and processes. Doing so will help you prepare for a successful holiday season with tangible results for your email marketing program.

## About RPE Origin

We are the industry's only vendor-agnostic, email-centric agency serving enterprise companies throughout their digital journey. We aim to be an indispensable partner for enterprise and agency clients who rely on email for success. Whether you need help choosing a new ESP, enhancing automated B2C or B2B customer journeys, or connecting data points across your tech stack, we help you move from simple to sophisticated to drive more revenue through email marketing.

Our team lives email every day, and that includes both email marketing and maximizing the connective tissue across all digital channels. With our customized approach and flexible services, we can do everything from one piece of the puzzle to the entire picture.

Need help keeping up with the holiday email rush?  
Contact our team to get the conversation started.





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