



Win the holiday marathon.

Prepare for the busiest ecommerce season yet with a 13-point checklist for B2C merchants.





The stakes have never been higher.

The holidays are the busiest time of year for ecommerce. During the 2021 holiday season, consumers spent 38 of those days surpassing \$3 billion in daily spend (up from 25 days in 2020). Online spending also grew 8.6%, compared to the 2020 holiday season and 44% over 2019. The momentum is clear, and the opportunities are many in an evolving ecommerce landscape.

No longer limited to select tentpole days like Cyber Monday and Black Friday, shoppers are instead spending throughout the entire holiday season. In 2021, an influx of consumers visited ecommerce stores earlier, with spending growing 19% in the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving. Every year, increasingly bigger spikes in revenue per minute establish new heights in potential revenue for merchants who can take advantage.

“The 2021 holiday shopping season was the first time where big promotional moments like Cyber Monday and Black Friday took on less of the spotlight,” says Taylor Schreiner, senior director of Adobe Digital Insights. “Like we saw during the COVID-19 pandemic, ecommerce has become a ubiquitous daily activity and a flexible way for shoppers to navigate product availability and higher prices.”

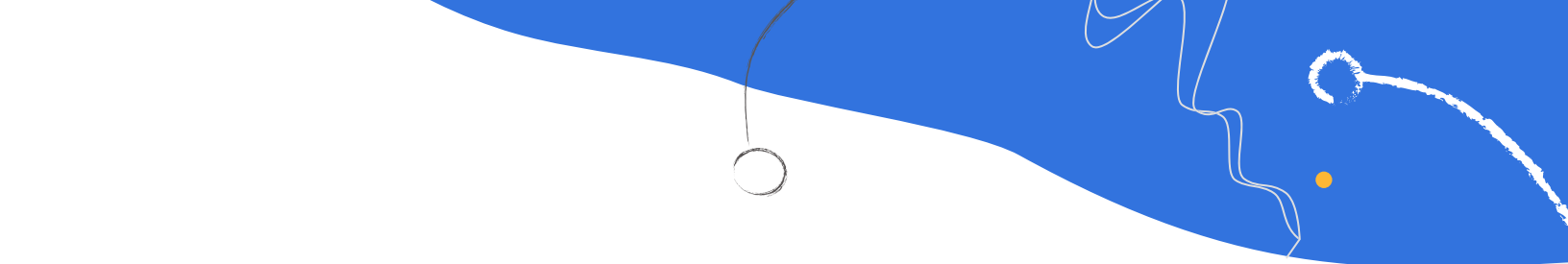
But with great opportunity comes greater competition. You can maximize success by ensuring you have the right commerce levers in place to earn your prospective customer’s business. With this comprehensive checklist, you’ll learn the critical commerce capabilities—empowering you to better personalize, streamline, and delight the surge of customers you’ll meet during the holiday season.

Ecommerce surges during the 2021 holiday season

- **\$204.5B** spent online
- **19%** increase in spending in the days leading up to Thanksgiving
- **40%** of online orders used curbside pickup in the days leading up to Christmas
- **500%** increase in buy now, pay later adoption
- **43%** of online retail sales made from smartphones

Source: Adobe, *Unboxing the 2021 Holiday Shopping Results*





Be the retailer who reads your customers' mind.

The difference between consideration and conversion can happen in a single moment for a customer while shopping.

Maybe they're looking for a new type of shirt, but they aren't sure exactly which one they want. Not only are they browsing the latest styles—they're also doing it while jumping between multiple devices. They're researching different brands on their laptop and then browsing all the colors on their tablet before purchasing the perfect pick on their phone. Each click, swipe, or search is a potential opportunity. On the flip side, any bump in the road, no matter how small, is a potential detour on the customer journey.

By personalizing the shopping experience—anticipating the customer's next choice or offering intuitive, lightning-fast live search—the best experiences will feel easy and effortless. From first visit to checkout, commerce capabilities that read your customers' minds will separate you from the competition and keep your customers coming back.

CAPABILITIES CHECKLIST:

Core product recommendations.

Relevant product recommendations are like shopping with a trusted best friend by your side. Based on a visitor's behavior, activity, or when matched to other similar shoppers, recommendations help surface new products or find related ones.

Personalized

Recommends items based on each shopper's current and previous onsite behavior or displays products most recently viewed by the shopper based on browser history.

The screenshot shows the HH website's 'THE VERGLAS COLLECTION' page. The navigation bar includes 'MEN', 'WOMEN', 'KIDS', 'GEAR', and 'DISCOVER', along with a search bar and a 'Checkout' button. The main heading is 'THE VERGLAS COLLECTION' with the subtext 'The essential collection for mountain lovers: Technical and versatile.' Below this are two buttons: 'SHOP MEN'S' and 'SHOP WOMEN'S'. The 'BEST SELLERS' section features four jackets:

- WOMEN'S PARAMOUNT SOFTSHELL JACKET: 2 colors, \$130.00
- WOMEN'S DAYBREAKER FLEECE JACKET: 10 colors, \$45.00
- WOMEN'S ADEN LONG RAIN JACKET: 4 colors, \$150.00
- WOMEN'S CREW SAILING VEST: 3 colors, \$125.00

Cross-sells and upsells

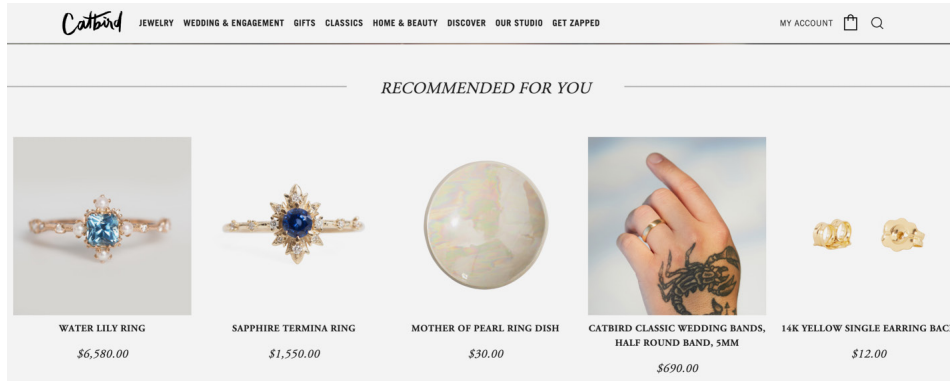
Recommends items most often viewed by other shoppers who viewed the same item, or items most often purchased by shoppers who also purchased the specified item.

The screenshot shows an HP product page for the 'HP 205 G4 NONTOUCH ALL-IN-ONE-PC'. The product price is THB19,811.00, with a crossed-out price of THB19,950.00, resulting in a 'SAVE THB 79.00'. The page includes a navigation bar with 'OVERVIEW', 'RECOMMENDED', 'FEATURES', 'SPECS', 'OFFERS', 'REVIEWS', and 'ASK A QUESTION'. Below the product details, a 'RECOMMENDED PRODUCTS' section displays five items:

- HP Earbuds Black Headset 150: THB 190.00
- HP P204v 19.5-inch Monitor: THB 4,720.00
- HP P22h G4 FHD Monitor: THB 5,990.00
- HP Boom Mic Headset 150: THB 390.00
- HP Smart Tank 720 All-in-One: THB 8,390.00

High-performing

Recommends products with the highest view-to-purchase or view-to-cart conversion rate.



See how custom jewelry company [Catbird](#) drove a 17% increase in conversion rate with product recommendations.



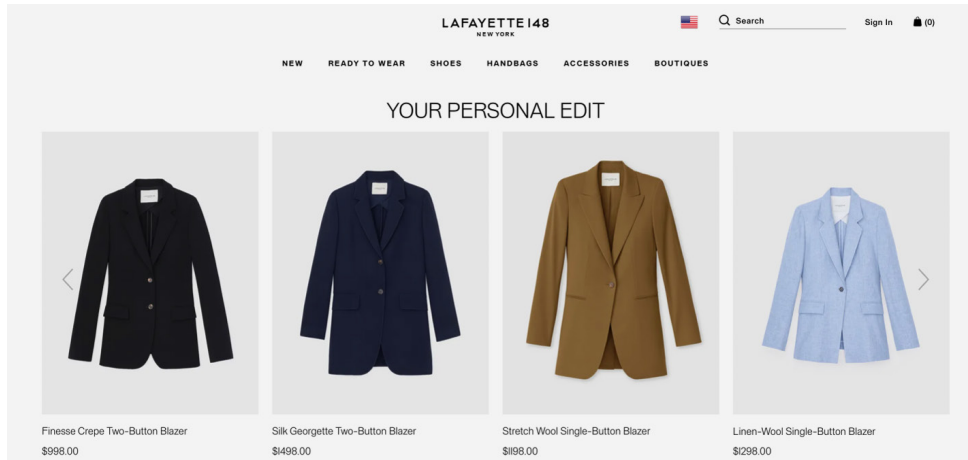
AI-powered product recommendations.

With the power of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, you can easily process and analyze products in a catalog or deep datasets to deliver product suggestions at scale.

Visual similarities

Recommends similar looking products to the product being viewed.

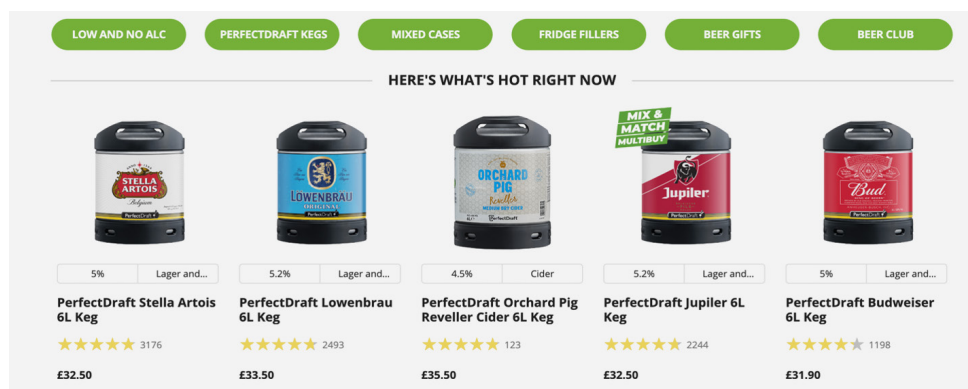
Pro tip: Use when images and the visual aspects are important to the shopping experience.



Trending

Aggregates browsing and purchase data across your site to determine and rank which products are the most recently popular with your shoppers.

Pro tip: Ideal for catalogs that have high turnover or highly variable audience shopping patterns.



Get started with our [guide to personalized product recommendations](#), where you'll learn why product recommendations are worth the investment as well as methods for easily and effectively getting started.

Checkout speed.

Whether you're a first-time or returning customer, the final step to purchase shouldn't require a second thought. With an array of thoughtful features delivering on all platforms by your side, a seamless checkout experience ultimately drives higher completion rates.

- **One-click checkout**

Saves customer payment information to provide a better returning customer experience.

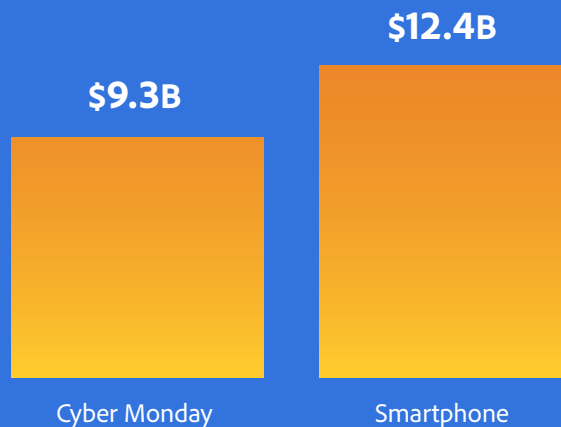
- **Speedy guest checkout**

Minimizes the time to purchase by allowing shoppers to check out without an existing account.

- **Mobile-optimized**

Ensures checkout is no-scroll and simple to drive a better mobile completion rate.

Improving smartphone checkout is worth more than a Cyber Monday.



Revenue potential from improved smartphone checkout vs. Cyber Monday prediction (US, Holiday 2019).

Source: Adobe Digital Insights Holiday Ecommerce Playbook

Flexible payment options.

A convenient checkout experience is now the standard, not the exception. Customers are demanding flexibility in the way they pay for purchases.

According to the *2021 Adobe Digital Economy Index*, the use of buy now, pay later (BNPL) services in the first half of 2021 grew 88% compared to 2019. Alternative payment options are a proven way to give sales a boost—generating additional purchases and increasing average purchase sizes by 15% or more in the PayPal Advertising Program.

- **Buy now, pay later (BNPL)**

Allows shoppers to buy a product and pay over time at no additional cost.

- **Expand popular payment methods**

Accepts a wider range of currencies and payment methods (PayPal, Venmo) to reduce cart abandonment and increase average order value.

See how [integrated payment solutions drive ecommerce growth](#).

Live search.

A rich opportunity no matter the category, live search delivers rapid, relevant, and intuitive experiences for the storefront. The numbers speak for themselves—33% of traffic uses site search and conversion rates can be 50% higher for site search users.

The more powerful your search capabilities are, the easier it is for customers to find the product they need—without scrolling through pages of products they're not interested in.

- **Search as you type**

Provides shoppers immediate results with every keystroke.

- **Search synonyms**

Help shoppers navigate throughout catalogs to the right set of products.

- **Sortable attributes**

Gives shoppers an easy way to change their views by relevancy, price, brand, ranking, and more.

- **Intelligent faceting**

Automatically pick and order the most relevant filters or facets so shoppers can narrow down what they're looking for.

- **Infinite scroll**

Automatically show more results as shoppers scroll with no additional page loading.

Check out how [Lovesac](#) delivers fast and relevant search across their web store.

Ensure a seamless mobile experience.

The smartphone is a pivotal tool and hub for today's shoppers. In fact, 59% of ecommerce purchases took place through mobile during the 2021 holiday season, according to Adobe.

But mobile isn't just a point of purchase. Consumers use their phones to find the closest store location, navigate their way to in-store products, and pay quickly through cardless checkout methods. Shopping in the mobile browser should feel as fast and frictionless as on any other platform.

The smartphone surge

Days with 50%+ of revenue from smartphones in the past 2 seasons:

12/25/21: 58%

12/24/21: 54%

12/26/21: 53%

12/25/20: 52%

11/25/21: 51%

12/19/21: 51%

12/18/21: 50%

Source: Adobe

Learn how [Shinola](#) delivered a shopping experience optimized for smartphone users.

What are progressive web apps (PWAs)?

PWA technology is the key to delivering an ecommerce experience that meets the expectations of today's digital, mobile-first consumers. An app-like, browser-based mobile environment, PWA is faster and more reliable than existing solutions. With lowered development and deployment costs, this technology continues to be adopted by businesses of all types.

- **Horizontal scrolling**
Presents related or similar products within a category without making the shopper visit additional pages or endlessly scroll vertically.
- **Streamlined navigation**
Removes unnecessary pages and links and consolidates to simplify the shopping experience.

Explore [PWA Studio](#)

Pop quiz: Is your mobile shopping experience ready for the holidays?

You might know your customers can track their order status on your website, but can they zoom in to see fine details on hi-res images? How long does your home page take to load on a mobile device? Do you display trust badges to show visitors that transactions are secure?

Stress-test your ecommerce storefront with a brief quiz—you'll come away feeling proud and prepared or confident knowing what you need to do to make over your mobile experience in time for the busiest season of the year.

[Take the quiz.](#)



The magic of effortless convenience.

The customer experience doesn't end at checkout. The key to delivering a memorable and delightful experience is meeting customer expectations all the way to fulfillment while offering convenient touches throughout.

Unified in-store and mobile experiences.

Connect your in-store and mobile experiences to keep customers engaged no matter where they are. The holiday season is hectic, and customers are shopping everywhere—on their phones, at local stores, checking their curbside order statuses, or finding their way down the aisles searching for products.

- **Product availability**

Shoppers can find out if products are in stock at stores close to them.

- **Seamless curbside pickup**

Customers can let a representative know they're waiting at the curb for pickup.



Inventory and order management.

Help customers avoid the dreaded “out-of-stock” message by proactively addressing shortages and stockouts with real-time product inventory availability and visibility.

- **Real-time stock accuracy**

Displays available products in real time by location, including what’s in stock in store.

Pro tip: Increase your revenue by reducing “out-of-stock” losses online and markdowns of in-store items that haven’t sold.

- **Out of stock and backorders**

Sets out-of-stock thresholds that will prevent stockouts.

- **Multichannel inventory tracking**

Manages inventory across multiple locations and sales channels with concurrent checkout protection and shipment matching.

Buy online and pick up in store (BOPIS)

The two weeks leading up to Christmas is crunch time, which is when flexible fulfillment options can be a last-minute lifesaver. Whether your customers want to buy online and pick up in store or have purchases shipped straight to their home address, be there with an option to meet their need.

- **Convenient customer pickup options**

Customers see product availability and select a store to pick up items either curbside or in store during their online purchase.

- **Customer email notifications**

Customers receive order information and specific pickup instructions at every step.

- **Customer check-in**

Customers can use their mobile device to notify store employees when they’ve arrived and provide details such as parking spot number and vehicle make and model.

- **Online visibility of in-store inventory**

Shows in-store availability to customers, which is crucial for driving online customers into stores.

See how [Sugarfina](#) delivers advanced omnichannel fulfillment experiences for customers..

BOPIS and curbside orders grew 40% YoY during the holiday season, peaking on December 23, 2020.

Source: Adobe Digital Insights Holiday Ecommerce Playbook



Make every visit special.

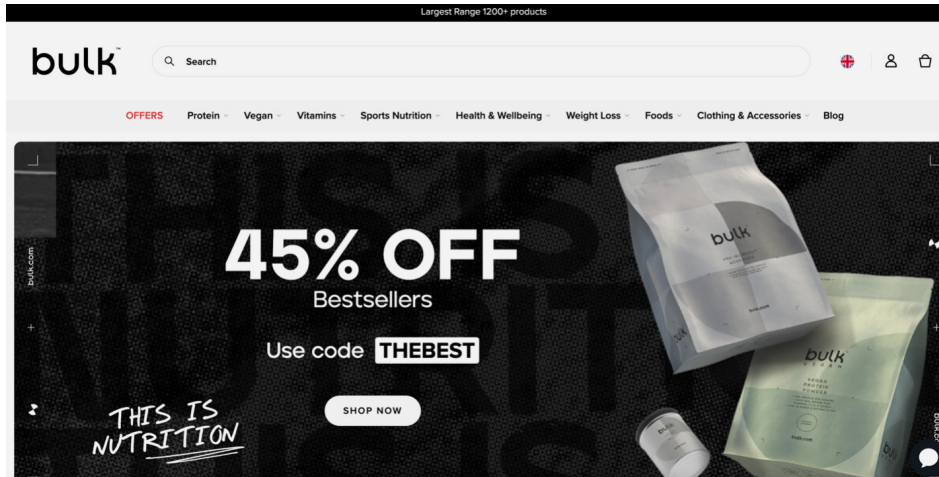
Every interaction is a chance to build deeper customer relationships. Setting up price rules to trigger discounts based on certain conditions is a powerful tool to add urgency and drive revenue at just the right moments.

Whether it's rewarding loyal customers with an unexpected coupon or offering an incentive to reach a minimum purchase, there are a variety of ways to tailor the deal to the shopper in front of you.

Cart rules cheat sheet

Cart price rules apply discounts to items in the shopping cart, based on a set of conditions. Use these cart rules to drive higher customer engagement and conversion rates across your web store.

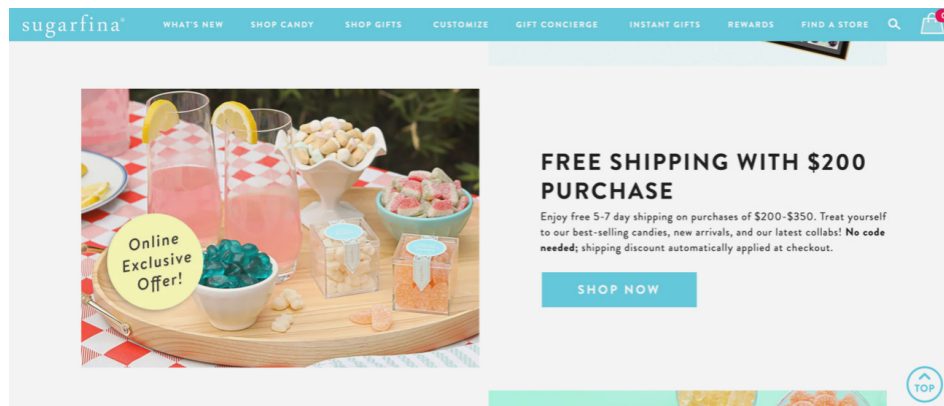
Coupon codes



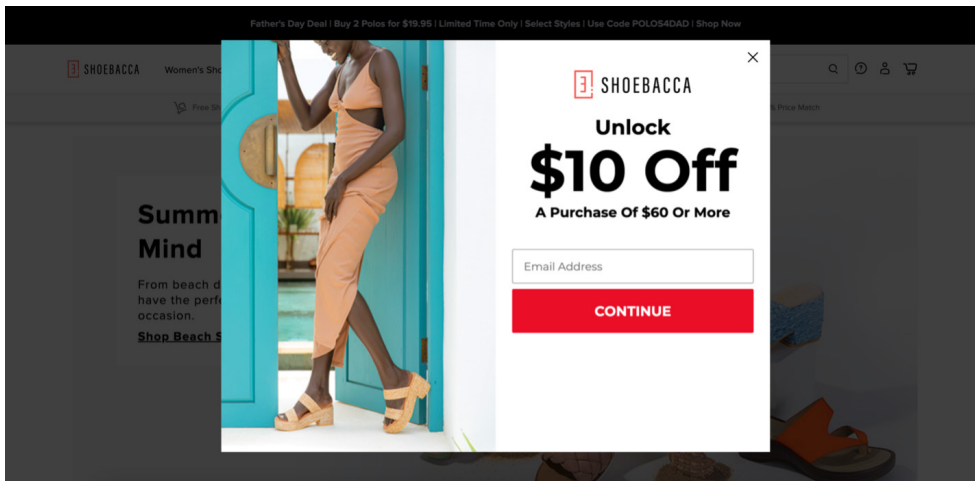
Buy X, get Y free



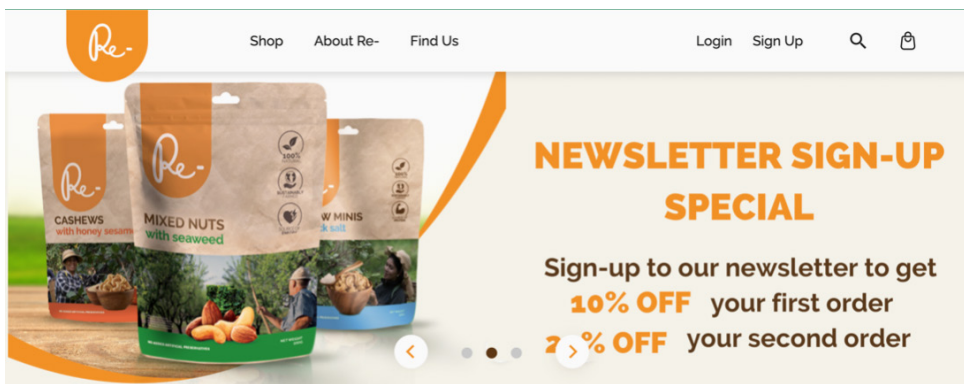
Free shipping



Discount with minimum purchase



Discount with first purchase



Pro tip: Once cart rules are set up, make sure to effectively communicate promotions throughout the site—and make it easy for customers to use the deals.

Ready for the seasonal surge?

Having the best storefront in the world doesn't mean anything if shoppers are too frustrated by a slow website to complete a purchase. Prepare for traffic spikes with rigorous load and performance testing to make sure you don't lose a single customer. Here are some best practices:

- When planning load testing, simulate real-life consumer traffic as much as possible. Test the most resource-intensive areas of an ecommerce site, especially since they're not cacheable (including checkout process and site search).
- The closer your test environment is to the real thing, the more accurate your data will be. Test production-like content since performance measurements can be impacted by the size of the content in the platform.

Check out how [Wyze](#) handles customer surges of any size from product launches to holiday peaks.

Recommended KPIs to test

- **Average response time (time to first byte or last byte)**
- **Latency bytes per second (throughput)**
- **Error rate**
- **Orders per hour**
- **Page views per hour**
- **Unique users per hour (concurrent shoppers)**

Create your holiday game plan.

Given the exponential growth of ecommerce during the holiday season, it's safe to say 2022 will likely see the biggest surge yet. Being in the hypercompetitive ecommerce landscape with overwhelming surges in traffic, capitalizing on every advantage is crucial for delighting your customers at scale.

Use this checklist to help electrify your game plan for a successful and profitable season this year and beyond. As consumer expectations continue to rise, those who meet the standard for excellence—and exceed it—will win.

Learn more about last year's blockbuster season and check out our 2021 holiday shopping trends and insights. Based on billions of data points, our report dives deep into consumer spending habits to help you better personalize your customers' experiences.

[Get details](#)



Sources

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