

# *A Holiday Season Like No Other*



How to Plan a Successful Influencer Marketing Holiday Campaign



One thing is certain: We need to paint a picture of a holiday season unlike any other. In this new reality, it is not exactly an easy time to look ahead and plan for the future, but it is more important than ever to prepare for the unknown.

Advertisers were already planning to overcome a unique set of challenges due to the upcoming elections, as consumer's attention will be largely focused on the results. Now, the global coronavirus pandemic has also forced us to stay nimble and flexible to adapt to consumer's changing sentiment and behavior.

How can you plan a successful influencer marketing campaign this holiday season?

Here are some essential insights you need to take into account.



## Smart Spending

COVID-19 brought on the largest spike in [unemployment](#) since the peak of the great recession. The fact that millions of Americans are unemployed can't be ignored when it comes to spending this holiday season. Even though [70% of consumers](#) don't plan to decrease spending for 2020 peak shopping days, there's no doubt consumers will try to find ways to spend smarter.

Consumers are always on the hunt for offers that will give them more for less. This year stretching their spend will be even more important. As brands evaluate their influencer strategies this year, they should consider teaming up with influencers to reach their loyal audiences and incentivize them to purchase using promo codes and other exclusive deals.

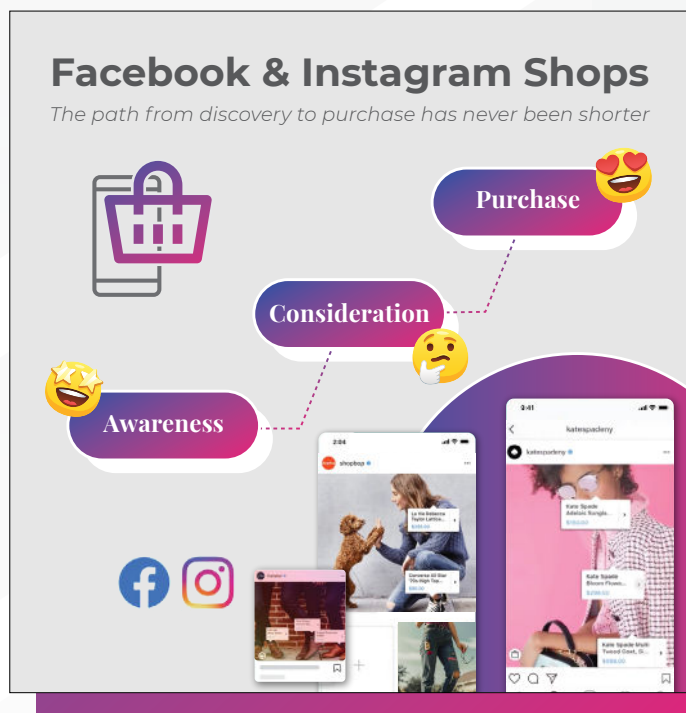
As people strive to make smarter choices, trusted recommendations will be crucial in the path to purchase. Influencers have always been seen as trusted sources of information because consumers fundamentally trust people more than they trust companies. According to [Edelman's Trust Barometer](#) report, 63% of consumers say they trust what influencers say about brands much more than what brands say about themselves.

## Social Commerce on the Rise

The coronavirus pandemic has been an unexpected catalyst for e-commerce adoption. People across the globe are welcoming the security and convenience that technology provides amidst the current environment. E-commerce growth has transcended generations. [Facebook reports](#) that amidst the pandemic, over 80% of Gen X and Boomers are shopping online at this time.

We expect these shopping habits to remain consistent during the holiday season and for social media to serve as a vital tool for consumers seeking to buy products safely online.

This year, platforms like Facebook and Instagram took their shopping features to the next level. With these sophisticated online shops, every part of the mobile shopping process feels seamless. Brands that use these tools to serve their consumers throughout the different touchpoints of the consumer's journey will be able to offer a smooth brand experience that creates the type of brand loyalty needed in today's economy.



**Eric Dahan**  
CEO

"The term social commerce has been used for over a decade, but in the age of influence, all commerce IS social commerce. The lines that define where we shop and where we discover have blurred. We are seeing this unfold now as Facebook releases shops and Amazon offers social functionality such as Amazon Live and Amazon Follow."



## Talking to a Diverse Audience

After the year we've all had, it's clear that today's consumers will shine a light on brands that fail to meet their demands for inclusivity in all forms of media. Modern marketers looking to connect with consumers meaningfully need to embrace and celebrate diversity all-year-round - this means, for example, not conflating the holiday season with just Christmas and instead acknowledging the various religious and non-religious expressions that will take place this holiday season.

*The question is then: how can brands meet these expectations and get it right?*

Luckily, social media platforms have given rise to a generation of brilliant creators from all walks of life who connect with audiences through shared interests. Brands have the opportunity to tap into these communities and connect with them purposefully.

During months of multicultural observances and celebrations, they can be of great guidance when it comes to communicating with audiences authentically. The holiday season is a socially-driven cultural celebration that evokes strong emotions. It's crucial to get it right.



# Creating Meaningful Connections with Customers

## New Traditions

Worried about shopping delays, traveling safety and traditional event cancellations, consumers are planning ahead and are ready to take a creative twist. Pinterest data shows that consumers have been craving the comfort of the holidays and planning earlier than ever before. More specifically — 8 months in advance. Holiday related searches on the platform jumped 77% in April 2020 vs. April 2019. That trend included a 3x increase in searches for “Christmas gift ideas.”

Over the past months we’ve seen how traditional celebrations, holidays and religious observances have been reinvented due to these extraordinary circumstances. Passovers turned into “Zoomovers” and drive-by birthday parties have now become the norm. Despite the challenges, consumers have demonstrated they adapt and still find ways to create memorable experiences.

We all know social media is the go-to place for inspiration. During the pandemic we have seen it all; people tie dying clothes, baking bread, making dalgonas, and mastering the DIY art. Can we blame influencers for skyrocketing these trends? Yes, we can.

Brands who are looking to connect with consumers as they plan these “new normal” holidays need to get creative and inspire audiences to think out of the box. Influencers will be great brand allies to help seamlessly integrate brands into unforgettable experiences.



“The trick for brands to harness the holidays (bet you just envisioned a reindeer didn’t you), is to break through the noise. It’s a crowded space, with advertisers pushing their products and services more than any other time of year. Brands need to consider this when planning and developing strategies that are unique and out of the box (now you’re picturing presents, I know). Move beyond the standard gifting campaigns and allow the content to connect consumers in a meaningful way during a time when we are all physically distant.”

**Maggie Reznikoff**

Director of Account Management





## Gifts with a Purpose

Every holiday season we are reminded of how universal the power of human emotion is. As people look back to the challenges of 2020, and look forward to the year ahead, it is safe to say that this year emotions will run high.

In times when people's lives are being impacted in profound ways, brands need to put consumers' needs first. Now more than ever, marketers need to remain hyper-aware of how they think, feel and behave.

According to Rakuten Advertising data, being "merry" will look a bit different this holiday season. Across immediate family, extended families, friends, co-workers and charities, consumers are most likely (41%) to decrease the amount they spend on their friends and coworkers and increase for immediate family and themselves. After all, most people are working from home and keeping their social gatherings to a minimum.

Always remember listening is the first and most critical step in creating meaningful experiences that strike the right tone, provide genuine value, and foster meaningful connections.

## The Spirit of Giving Back

During the holiday season, we are often reminded that it's important to give back. We have seen immense acts of kindness throughout the year amidst this global crisis. People are eager to help those in need. According to Rakuten Advertising data, Americans are the most charitable, indicating that they will increase their spend on charity/gift by 19%, the highest of any country.

Brands that join consumers on spreading the holiday cheer will increase engagement and build brand loyalty. Now more than ever, consumers want to put their dollars towards causes and values that they truly believe in.

# The Human Touch





Consumers are becoming immune to 'brand speak'. Working with influencers will allow brands to connect with consumers on a deeper level. This holiday season will be a great opportunity for brands to create meaningful human experiences.

We recommend marketers to be mindful of the following guidelines as they plan their influencer strategies:

- 1 Identify, act and communicate upon a brand purpose that overlaps with your customers' values. This will help brands be better positioned during this holiday season and moving forward.
- 2 The nuances of brand voice are more delicate than ever. Always lead by empathy, remain close to your brand's values and trust the influencer's voice.
- 3 As circumstances change, be open to being flexible and pivot to better serve your consumers. Adaptability is key in today's environment.



Photo credit:  
@juliederu for Hallmark

	 Instagram	 Pinterest	 YouTube	 TikTok
<b>Picking Formats Wisely:</b> The Medium is the Message	<p><b>Stories (15 seconds)</b> Interactivity: Ask the influencer to use features like AR lenses, polls, quizzes, questions, and more to give your audience the opportunity to interact directly with your brand.</p> <p><b>Instagram Feed:</b> Video (1 minute) Photo Create a hashtag strategy to make the content more discoverable.</p> <p><b>Other formats to consider:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• IG TV (15 minutes - mobile / 60 minutes - web)</li><li>• Instagram Live (1 hour)</li><li>• Instagram Reels (30 seconds)</li></ul>	<p><b>Photo Pins:</b> 2:3 is the recommended aspect ratio.</p> <p><b>Video Pins (30 min max):</b> Don't rely on audio or dialogue and keep them over 4 seconds long.</p> <p>Clear titles (100 characters) and descriptions (500 characters) help Pins get discovered in search.</p> <p><b>Story Pins:</b> They don't disappear after 24-hours.</p>	<p><b>Long-form video, 10-15min.</b></p> <p><b>Video descriptions:</b> Organized and detailed information about a product. Include price, full name, release date, and corresponding link to shop.</p> <p><b>Optimization:</b> Use titles and descriptions to your advantage. YouTube is perfect for SEO keywords and key search terms, as Google will recommend YouTube videos before any other video uploading platform.</p>	<p><b>Quick bites, micro-learning videos.</b></p> <p><b>Trends:</b> To get discovered on TikTok, use current trends to jump into the conversation quickly. This means using existing relevant audios and styles, effects, filters, and hashtags.</p> <p><b>Micro-learning:</b> Keep all TikTok content short but informative. Highlight key features using few words, relying on images or videos to show details.</p>
<b>Storytelling Style:</b> Create Unforgettable Micro-moments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Holiday outfits</li><li>• Gift guides</li><li>• Recipes</li><li>• Behind-the-scenes</li><li>• Demos / Tutorials</li><li>• Interviews</li><li>• Takeovers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Holiday Hosting</li><li>• Food</li><li>• Decorations</li><li>• DIY gifts</li><li>• Holiday outfits</li><li>• Lettering</li><li>• Family Activities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Holiday vlogs</li><li>• Makeup looks - holiday collections</li><li>• Unboxing/product reviews</li><li>• Dedicated videos showing the product in many different ways</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comedy</li><li>• Short-films</li><li>• Recipes, How-To content</li><li>• Viral holiday dances</li><li>• Before/After videos</li><li>• Micro-learning videos</li></ul>
<b>Inspire Action:</b> How to Convert?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Swipe Ups</li><li>• Link in bio</li><li>• Shoppable Posts</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Links (Add clear CTAs to the descriptions to make sure users click on the link)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Affiliate codes and</li><li>• Links in video descriptions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Link in bio</li><li>• Shoppable Videos</li><li>• Hashtag Challenge Plus</li></ul>



# LOOKING FOR SOME HOLIDAY INSPIRATION?!

Here are some examples that show influencers are great partners for the most wonderful time of the year:



**@iamkrislondon:** Opening a few gifts a little early this year! #GiftBehavior My Girl loves Scratchers! Do you open a few gifts before Christmas? Comment below and don't forget to get the #HolidayScratchers from the California Lottery! @CALottery



**@thatsheart:** patiently waiting to open my Christmas gifts be like 🤔📺 Christmas decorate with me in my newest YT video! I take you along with me to shop for the cutest home decor and also show you how to do some fun holiday DIYs with @calottery's new holiday scratchers! ✨



**@chrishanxoxo:** Here is a holiday surprise for my fashion girl Kim! @CALottery #HolidayScratchers make perfect gifts!!! #12DaysofScratchers Challenge to gift holiday scratchers to a friend. Let's spread the joy!

To learn more about this great activation watch our [video case study](#).

Keeping up with the constantly changing 2020 trends is what we do best. [Contact Open Influence](#) for the best holiday influencer marketing strategy.