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The Holiday Visibility Playbook for SMBs

2025 Edition



The holidays are a make-or-break season for many small businesses. But let's be real: most owners are juggling five jobs and don't have a marketing team on standby. That's where this playbook comes in. Think of it as your ultra-organized friend who already made the to-do list and handed you the shortcuts. Don't wait until Black Friday panic sets in – start preparing NOW!

Holiday Prep for Small Businesses: Start Now

Get ready for the holiday season before it arrives. With shoppers starting their research in September and making purchases before Thanksgiving, **early preparation is key to success**, especially in 2025 with AI search changing how customers find businesses online.



In this playbook, we'll cover:

- Why Early Holiday Preparation Matters
- Common Holiday Preparation Mistakes
- High-Impact Actions for Busy Business Owners
- How AI is Changing Online Visibility
- How to Unleash AI for Holiday Efficiency
- Holiday Ideas to Swipe
- A Real Holiday Sales Success Story
- A Month-by-Month Marketing Checklist
- ... and more!



Why Early Holiday Preparation Matters

Shopping Starts Earlier Every Year

Customers now begin researching gifts as early as September, fill their online carts in October, and finalize purchases even before Thanksgiving arrives. This extended shopping period means early visibility is crucial.



Missing Peak Season = Missing Revenue

The holiday season is when customers are actively looking to spend. If your business isn't easily discoverable online during this critical window, you're essentially invisible, missing out on significant revenue opportunities.



AI Search Changes Everything

Unlike traditional search engines that list many businesses, AI-powered results (like Google AI Overviews or ChatGPT) display only a handful. This makes early optimization essential for your business to stand out and be seen.



Common Holiday Preparation Mistakes



Starting Too Late

- ✓ Start now. Even small steps in September make a big difference.

The most common mistake is waiting until November or December to begin holiday preparations.

Updating Only One Channel

- ✓ Plan simple updates across your website, social media, and Google Business Profile.

Focusing solely on Instagram or your website isn't enough – customers expect consistency across all platforms.

Ignoring AI Tools

- ✓ Use AI to brainstorm, write captions, update listings, and lighten your workload.

Not leveraging AI to help create content and marketing materials makes preparation unnecessarily difficult.

Strategic Moves for Visionary Business Owners

✓ Update Your Homepage

Put holiday offers and products front and center on your website homepage where visitors will immediately see them.



✓ Refresh All Channels

Put holiday offers and products front and center on your website homepage where visitors will immediately see them.



✓ Create a Holiday Landing Page

Put holiday offers and products front and center on your website homepage where visitors will immediately see them.



Alicia Pringle, small business visibility expert

"Small business owners, you are unsung heroes. You don't need a massive campaign – just stay organized and build a solid foundation."

How AI is Changing Online Visibility

AI search results have made search more personalized and specific, creating both **challenges and opportunities**.



Limited Results

AI search results only show a handful of websites, making competition for visibility fiercer than ever.



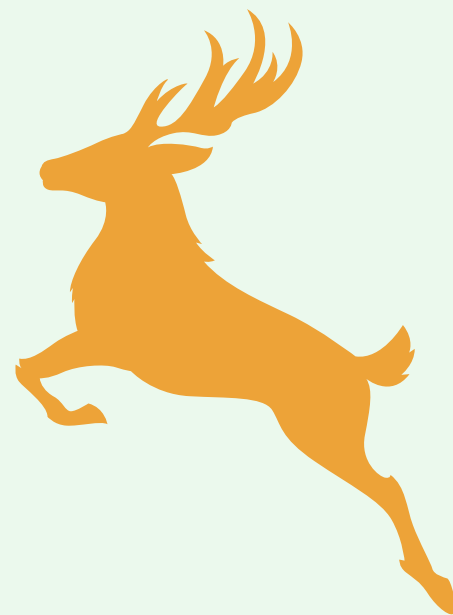
Content Sources

AI pulls information from your website, Google Business Profile, and social media to generate results.



AI as Your Assistant

Use AI tools to create website content, marketing materials, and social media posts – think of AI as the assistant you hired for your business.



Unleash AI for Holiday Efficiency



This holiday season, let artificial intelligence be **your secret weapon.** Empower your small business by leveraging AI **to streamline tasks and maximize your online visibility,** freeing up valuable time.

✓ Brainstorm with ChatGPT

Generate fresh headlines, social media posts, and email subject lines tailored to your holiday campaigns.

✓ Summarize Reviews with Gemini

Quickly distill customer feedback into compelling testimonials and highlight key positive sentiments.

✓ Refresh Your Homepage

Utilize AI site builders to update your website with festive elements and prominent holiday offers.



REMEMBER:

Always edit AI-generated content to stay true to your unique brand voice.

Swipe These Holiday Ideas

No Time? No Problem. Start Here.



✓ Visual Inspiration

Refresh your homepage with a festive hero section to immediately convey your holiday spirit and promotions.



✓ Gift Guide Categories

Make it easy for shoppers to find the perfect present:

- Gifts Under \$25 / \$50 / \$100
- For the Foodie / Tech Lover / Wellness Enthusiast
- Stocking Stuffers & Last-Minute Finds
- Experiences & Service Bundles

✓ Content Prompts

Spark engagement with these holiday-themed content ideas:

- **Instagram Caption:** "Warm wishes and cozy deals! ☕ Find the perfect gift in our holiday collection. #ShopSmall #HolidayGifts"
- **Email Subject Line:** "Your December Delights: New Arrivals & Holiday Savings Inside!"

👍 Pro-Tip: Ask ChatGPT:

"Write a playful product description for [product/service name], emphasizing its unique holiday appeal and gift-giving potential."

📋 FAQ Ideas That Help You Rank

Include these in your website's FAQ section:

- **"What's your return policy?"**
Clearly state your return policy.
- **"How fast is shipping?"**
Provide estimated shipping times and delivery cutoffs.
- **"Are gift cards available?"**
Highlight both digital and physical gift card options.
- **SEO Tip:** Submit your updated sitemap to Google Search Console for quick indexing of new holiday content.
- **For Service Businesses:** Boost review velocity and local mentions by encouraging reviews on Google and Yelp and ensure accurate local directory listings.

Product vs. Service Business Strategies

Product-Based Businesses

Focus on answering: What's in stock? How do I buy it?
Will it arrive on time?

- ✓ Create gift categories (under \$50, stocking stuffers)
- ✓ Highlight shipping cutoffs ("Ships by Dec 18")
- ✓ Showcase holiday-themed product photos

VS.

Service-Based Businesses

Get creative with packaging your services as gifts:

- ✓ Add gift card options with printable versions
- ✓ Create limited-time holiday service bundles
- ✓ Example: Auto shop offering "a year of routine maintenance" as perfect gift for college students

One Must-Do Tip: Google Yourself 🔍

✓ Shape Your Narrative

If your online presence isn't what you want, take action: update your website, build comprehensive FAQ pages and refresh all your social media profiles.

✓ What Do Others See?

Google your business and look yourself up on ChatGPT to discover what customers and AI models find when they search for you online.



✓ Broaden Your Reach

Go beyond the usual: engage on platforms like Reddit (which AI often sources from), seek positive local news coverage and share your story far and wide.

Success Story: Wellness Retreat



Early Preparation **Pays Off**

A wellness retreat in **Sedona, Arizona** – not a traditional holiday business – saw **significant results** from early SEO work:

- ✓ Ranked for 260 search queries including "women's healing" and "spiritual retreat"
- ✓ Generated 700+ clicks from organic search
- ✓ Perfectly positioned when shoppers sought meaningful, experience-focused holiday gifts



This demonstrates how early preparation sets businesses up to win, even in unexpected ways.

90-60-30-7 Day Holiday Countdown



Your Month-by-Month Marketing Checklist for **Holiday Success**



90 Days (September) | PLAN

- Finalize holiday products, bundles or services
- Create a promotional calendar with dates and offers
- Take holiday-themed product photos
- Update website copy with seasonal keywords
- Start blog and social content planning



60 Days (October) | LAUNCH

- Build one seasonal landing page
- Update Google Business Profile (hours, offers, holiday photos)
- Launch Google Ads for holiday promos
- Start posting holiday teasers and product photos on social
- Advertise early bird discounts



30 Days (November) | PROMOTE

- Actively promote through all channels: social media, Google Ads, email, SMS
- Share gift guides, stocking stuffer ideas or bundles
- Add "Ships by..." cutoffs (for products)



7 Days (December) | CONVERT

- Use countdown posts: "Only X days left!"
- Promote pickup, local delivery, or gift cards
- Post holiday hours on your site and profiles
- Share last-chance reminders across all channels

If You Only Have One Hour for Holiday Prep This Week...

Feeling overwhelmed? Even a single hour can make a significant difference. Here's how to make it count.



Post One Product Teaser on Social Media

Spark interest! Choose a high-demand item and post a sneak peek with a call to action.



Create a "Gift Ideas" Section on Your Site

Simplify shopping for your customers. Curate a page of popular products categorized as gift suggestions.



Update Your Homepage with a Holiday Banner

Make your holiday offerings visible immediately. A festive banner signals readiness for the season.





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Off You Go!

With our Holiday Visibility Playbook backing your next move, it's not a matter of if you'll see holiday sales success, but only when.

Stay confident, stay focused and make your move early – you'll be strolling merrily along while the competition scrambles to get their holiday storefronts set.

From all of us here at Network Solutions, best wishes for a brilliant sales season this year and for years to come.



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The Holiday Visibility Playbook was developed by the Network Solutions Content Team to help small businesses prepare for their most important sales season. It's grounded in proven best practices, current market insights, and expert perspectives from leaders who work with SMBs every day.

This edition was informed by an interview with Alicia Pringle, Senior Director of Online Marketing, Network Solutions, whose experience helping businesses strengthen their online visibility shaped several of the strategies featured here. You can watch the full conversation with Alicia [here](#).

The team also partnered with AI for some of the visuals in this playbook—blending creativity with innovation to make the strategies not only useful, but engaging to explore.

Whether you're refining your website, boosting your local listings or planning seasonal campaigns, our goal is simple: deliver practical, actionable plays you can put into motion today so you're ready to win this holiday season.

