



## Microsoft Advertising

2020 Holiday Guide:  
Key tips for executing an  
effective search campaign this  
holiday season

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Welcome! As COVID-19 has shifted our way of living and shaken our economic stability, the Holiday season in retail this year seems much more unknown.

As you're planning your 2020 holiday campaign, Microsoft Advertising is sharing shopping trends and holiday insights to help you plan for the top shopping and click days in your campaigns.



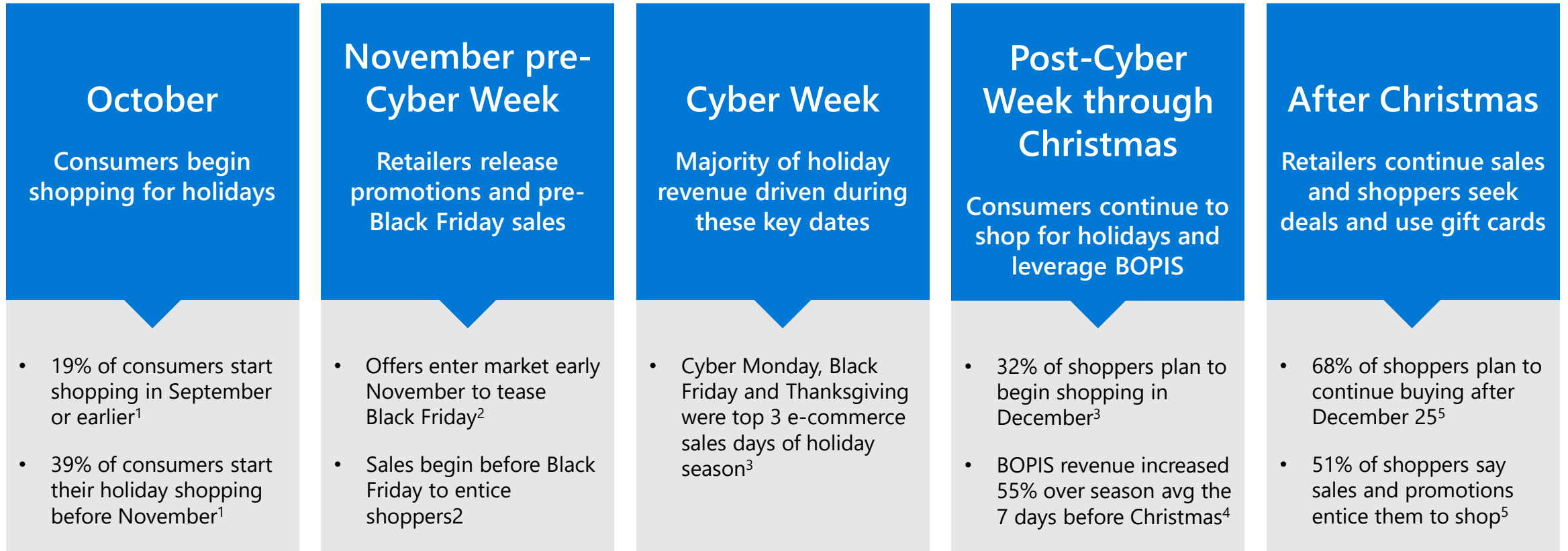
# Key dates to plan your 2020 holiday marketing campaign

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# Consider holiday shopping trends when planning your campaign

When planning your holiday campaign this year, be aware of shopping trends to ensure you're reaching consumers when they're researching and buying products.



Sources:

1. National Retail Federation, '2019 Winter Holiday Trends'
2. Forbes, 'When is Black Friday 2019?'
3. eMarketer 'US Holiday 2019 and Looking Ahead to Holiday 2020 Planning'.
4. Adobe, 'Adobe Digital Insights Holiday Recap 2019'
5. National Retail Federation, '3 ways consumers are continuing to shop after the holidays'.



# 2019 holiday top click days extend past Cyber Week



Top click days of the holiday season are primarily during Cyber Week, however, weeks leading up to Christmas saw many high-click days. Cyber Monday had the most clicks.

NOVEMBER 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

DECEMBER 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



Top click days,  
all devices



Black Friday



Cyber Monday




Bidding on less competitive days will enable advertisers to take advantage of lower CPCs and ensure coverage over the multi-month shopping journey.

# New year, same key dates to build your marketing calendar around



NOVEMBER 2020						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

DECEMBER 2020						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

-  Black Friday
-  Cyber Monday
-  Expected peak search days

The post-Thanksgiving dates of Black Friday and Cyber Monday are expected again to deliver.

Don't exhaust your budget on Cyber Week, be sure to extend it through early January to capture the most shoppers.



# Microsoft Advertising Pre-Cyber Week Checklist

October 1 – Nov 23

39%

of consumers start their holiday shopping before November.<sup>1</sup>



42M

PC retail searchers on the Microsoft Search Network not reached on Google.<sup>2</sup>



## Start building an audience of your best customers

- ✓ Ensure [Conversion Tracking](#) is set up to build remarketing pools and measure your impact online and offline.
- ✓ Build awareness before Cyber Week sales start by extending reach beyond search with [Microsoft Audience Ads](#).
- ✓ Set up [automated rules and bids](#) early in the season to allow the algorithm to build in advance of Cyber Week.
- ✓ Reach mobile audiences through our [Partner Network](#) and get performance insights with website reports.

## Learn how headlines and descriptions perform for your business objectives

- ✓ Use [responsive search ads](#) to take advantage of additional headline and character limits, and let Microsoft Advertising identify and report to you the best performing ad combinations.

## Influence decision-making among those who are choosing brands

- ✓ Increase your search term coverage using customized ad experiences with [Dynamic Search Ads](#), and uncover new business opportunities without draining your budget and team resources with [broad match](#).
- ✓ Use broad keyword targeting (e.g., category keywords, brand keywords) with [In-market Audiences](#) or [remarketing](#) layered to reach relevant audiences who may be searching in a variety of ways.
- ✓ Help your ads be more visible with mainline bidding. Check out the Opportunities Tab for bid adjustment recommendations

## Tease upcoming sales and events

- ✓ Enhance your text ads with eye-catching [ad customizers](#) to give potential customers greater incentive to click your ads.

1. National Retail Federation, '2019 Winter Holiday Trends'  
2. comScore qSearch, Explicit Core Search (custom), U.S., Dec 2019; industry categories based on comScore classifications. Data represents desktop traffic only.



# Microsoft Advertising Cyber Week checklist

Nov 24 – Nov 30

86%

of Cyber Week online sales had free shipping.<sup>1</sup>



39%

of all retail PC paid clicks happen on the Microsoft Search Network.<sup>2</sup>



## Work smarter to be more efficient

- ✓ Have more control and flexibility when enabling campaigns, adjust budgets and send email alerts with [automated rules and bids](#) or scripts. Create an automatic rule to optimize your campaigns, ad groups, ads and keywords.
- ✓ Focus on downstream conversions when CPCs are most competitive with [Target CPA](#), [Enhanced CPC](#) and [Maximize Conversions](#). Let Microsoft Advertising adjust your keyword bids in real time to reach the CPA you want.
- ✓ Hone efforts to expand coverage on highly profitable products or priority categories, and bid differently based on custom labels you create, with [page feed Dynamic Search Ads](#).
- ✓ Sharpen audience targeting using your own rich, first-party customer data with [Custom Audiences](#), which can be built based on segments like purchase history, lifetime value and time since last purchase.
- ✓ Reduce the risk of campaigns pausing during peak shopping by automatically redistributing unused budget to top performers with [Shared Budgets](#).
- ✓ Save time and target customers ready to buy across the Microsoft Audience Network with [In-market Audiences](#).

## Compete by leading with offer-focused messaging

- ✓ Display special offers on specific products or site-wide sales with [Merchant Promotions](#), via Microsoft Shopping campaign Product Ads. Share top products and holiday deals with the exclusive [Flyers Extension](#).
- ✓ Highlight competitive offers, top features of your business and value propositions with [Callout Extensions](#); expanding your ads could increase click-through rate.
- ✓ Improve ad effectiveness with [ad customizers and Target audience ID](#) to provide better deals to audiences built pre-Cyber Week, and those already looking for your products or service.
- ✓ Reconnect with visitors that leave your website with [remarketing](#). Provide a compelling offer to drive conversions.

1. eMarketer 'US Holiday 2019 and Looking Ahead to Holiday 2020 Planning'.

2. comScore qSearch, Explicit Core Search (custom), U.S., Dec 2019; industry categories based on comScore classifications. Data represents desktop traffic only.





# Microsoft Advertising Post-Cyber Week Checklist

Dec 1 – Jan 3

32%

of shoppers plan to begin shopping in December.<sup>1</sup>



55%

increase in BOPIS revenue over season average the 7 days before Christmas.<sup>2</sup>

74M

Retail PC searchers on the Microsoft Search Network.<sup>3</sup>



## Convert last-minute shoppers by making in-store and digital shopping complementary

- ✓ Reach those who prefer to buy online and pick up in-store by promoting products available in nearby stores with [Local Inventory Ads](#) (LIA); provide the exact store location with [Location Extensions](#); share in-store pickup availability with the BOPIS badge displayed with LIA.

## Be direct

- ✓ Drive customers to click through clear calls-to-action with [Action Extensions](#). Encourage engagement through direct messages, such as “Download” or “Reserve.”
- ✓ Use [countdown customizers](#) to ensure your customers know when shipping promotions end.
- ✓ Highlight top features of your business, like free shipping dates, with [Callout Extensions](#) and Promotion Extensions.

## Optimize based on learnings gleaned from (pre-)Cyber Week performance

- ✓ Reduce setup time and improve ad quality with [ad customizers](#). Let Microsoft Advertising do the heavy lifting – provide one ad copy and hundreds of customized ad variations will be created to test across audiences.
- ✓ Redistribute unused budget to top campaigns, increase your chances of getting more clicks and ensure high-performing campaigns do not pause with [Shared Budgets](#).
- ✓ Boost clicks and conversions outside search with [Microsoft Audience Ads](#) and remarket to those who viewed or added specific products to their carts with [Product Audiences](#).
- ✓ Target your best customers on any device with [device targeting](#) and advertise where your best customers are with [location targeting](#).

1. eMarketer 'US Holiday 2019 and Looking Ahead to Holiday 2020 Planning'.

2. Adobe, 'Adobe Digital Insights Holiday Recap 2019'

3. comScore qSearch, Explicit Core Search (custom), U.S., Dec 2019; industry categories based on comScore classifications. Data represents desktop traffic only.

# Holiday: Retail best practices



## Be there ahead of time.

- ✓ Review last season's campaigns for successes and lessons learned.
- ✓ Set budgets to accommodate increases in traffic.
- ✓ Upload campaigns early.
- ✓ Double-check to make sure all relevant accounts and campaigns are active.
- ✓ Follow up on any rejected ads.
- ✓ Add new, relevant and emerging keywords.
- ✓ Test new features and pilots to optimize before traffic volumes increase with peak season.

## Find approaches for a better ROI.

- ✓ Test In-market Audiences directly and indirectly related to your industry.
- ✓ Budget for PC/tablet and mobile traffic.
- ✓ Plan your budgets for periods of high CPC.
- ✓ Opt in to search partner sites to expand your mobile reach.
- ✓ Use long-tail brand terms.

## Optimize keywords, ads and bids.

- ✓ Set up the relevant ad extensions to drive more traffic.
- ✓ Test new ad copy variations.
- ✓ Set bids in anticipation of increased competition during the seasonal peaks.
- ✓ Apply auto-bidding strategies to take advantage of key audiences.
- ✓ Set up Automated Rules to schedule and automate your top campaign management tasks on a weekly, or even daily, basis for invaluable time savings and efficiency gains.
- ✓ Optimize your keywords and ads by testing Dynamic Search Ads and Responsive Search Ads.

## Optimize Shopping Campaigns.

- ✓ Schedule Merchant Promotions and Flyers Extensions to display relevant site wide or category specific offers and top products.
- ✓ Refresh your product feed daily.
- ✓ Send your full product feed with all product offers. Search query trends can change quickly, ensure your products are eligible to serve as traffic fluctuates.
- ✓ Go beyond the required attributes and populate your feed with as many recommended attributes as possible - including GTIN, MPN, Brand, size, color, shipping cost, and multiple images (up to 10 additional).
- ✓ Use Local Inventory Ads to promote instore products and include the Buy Online, Pick Up In-store (BOPIS) badge, if applicable.



## Ready to learn more?



Want to make search advertising a key part of your company's retail holiday marketing plan?

**Contact Microsoft Advertising**



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[advertising.microsoft.com](https://advertising.microsoft.com)