

HOLIDAY SHIPPING GUIDE:

# SURVIVING THE HOLIDAY SEASON



The holiday season is the busiest time of the year for businesses and retailers, representing almost 20% of annual revenue for the retail industry. Although the holiday craze starts before Black Friday, the earlier you prepare for the busy season, the higher the chances are to have a successful shipping experience during the rush.

## 2018/2019 HOLIDAY SHOPPING SEASON STATS

BILLION

**\$998**

OVERALL RETAIL SALES REVENUE IN 2018

BILLION

**\$7.87**

RECORD SPEND ON CYBER MONDAY IN 2018 IN THE U.S.

BILLION

**\$550**

THE TOTAL COST OF RETURNS ESTIMATED IN 2020

MILLION

**165.8**

MILLION AMERICANS MADE PURCHASES BETWEEN THANKSGIVING AND CYBER MONDAY

MORE THAN

**40%**

OF CUSTOMERS BEGIN SHOPPING BEFORE HALLOWEEN

MORE THAN

**61%**

OF SHOPPERS PLAN TO DO LAST-MINUTE SHOPPING

MORE THAN

**95%**

OF SHOPPERS SAY DISCOUNTS WOULD MAKE THEM SHOP WITH A NEW RETAILER

MORE THAN

**75%**

OF SHOPPERS ASSUME FREE DELIVERY ON THEIR ONLINE ORDERS



## TOP 2019 U.S. HOLIDAY SHOPPING DATES

October 31	Halloween
November 28	Thanksgiving
November 29	Black Friday
December 2	Cyber Monday
December 14	Free Shipping Day
December 25	Christmas
February 14	Valentine's Day

## UPS 2019 DOMESTIC SHIPPING DEADLINES

UPS Ground:	<b>December 13</b>	UPS 2nd Day Air:	<b>December 20</b>
UPS 3-Day Select:	<b>December 19</b>	UPS Next Day Air:	<b>December 23</b>

## KEY STEPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL HOLIDAY SHIPPING SEASON

### 1 ALWAYS PLAN AHEAD

There is no such thing as "too early" when it comes to holiday shipping preparation. Start planning a strategy in advance, ideally in the early fall. Take a look back at the prior year's historical data and make proper adjustments to avoid disruptions, delays, and frustrated customers.

### 2 PACK IT WITH LOVE

Customer experience is crucial due to the high volume of people buying presents for their friends, family and loved ones. Your products are now gifts with emotional context, and nobody wants to receive broken or damaged items for Christmas. Make sure you have enough packing equipment so that your shipments will be delivered safely.

### 3 TAKE CARE OF INVENTORY

Make sure that you have all the products in stock in response to your estimations. Order 20-30% more packing materials than you have estimated to be fully stocked. Storing and organizing products in the most efficient way will help enhance order fulfillment speed and shipping speed as well.

### 4 USE AUTOMATION & DATA

Use automated tools and customer management systems to collect and analyze information about customer behavior. The use of data will help your company forecast which products will be in high demand during the holiday season, and manage shipments in the most efficient manner.

### 5 HIRE HELP

It is a smart idea for companies to hire additional staff, if needed, during the holiday season to help improve efficiency and avoid overworking employees. FedEx and UPS undergo seasonal hiring every year. In 2018, UPS hired around 95,000 people to help during the holidays, while FedEx hired 55,000 people to their staff.

### 6 STRATEGY FOR LAST MINUTE ORDERS

A recent survey shows that 77% of customers are planning to do last-minute holiday shopping, and 100% of them expect to receive their orders on-time. Check all of the postal services and carrier shipping deadlines to plan shipments. Businesses should check all processes and deadlines before the last day of the busy shopping season arrives.

### 7 SET REALISTIC SHIPPING DEADLINES

Make sure you have discussed the 'Order By' dates with your team, business partners and clearly specified it to customers. Don't promise any unrealistic product volumes and shipping deadlines, otherwise, you'll end up losing customers. It will eliminate confusion among buyers and take a lot of stress off of your company.

### 8 ORGANIZE YOUR STORING SPACE

Having an organized and well-prepared warehouse or storing facility is crucial for fast order fulfillment and shipping. When orders begin to come in and the volume of shipments goes up, it will help simplify the process if your warehouse and shipping area is clean and ready to go.

### 9 UTILIZE A SHIPPING PLATFORM

If your company is shipping items larger than a parcel, you may consider partnering with a shipping provider for truckload and less-than-truckload shipments. Shipping large items like appliances or furniture can easily be done through an online shipping provider and can help during the busy season.

### 10 PREPARE FOR RETURNS

The holiday season is traditionally followed with extremely high return rates, which can jump up to 40-50% of total sales. Research shows that 67% of customers will check your return policy before making a purchase. Estimate the approximate returns percentage and get prepared for it to keep customers happy.

## HOLIDAY SHIPPING WITH GOSHIP.COM

Does your product dimensions or volume exceed standard parcel sizes? GoShip.com can help you ship **full truckload** and **less-than-truckload** shipments in the most affordable and convenient way.

Our online, innovative shipping platform includes:

- Access to the wide carrier network and exclusive shipping rates
- Completely online, self-service booking tool
- Quick and free quote comparisons
- Freight insurance & easy claims process
- Small business & retail shipping services



Get a **FREE** shipment estimate right now!



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