

The holiday shopping season starts sooner than you think.

Four insights to help you prepare.

It's now easier than ever for consumers to find the best deals as soon as they become available. Holiday shoppers no longer have to travel from store to store, they simply swipe from site to site on their smart phones. Savvy retailers that prepare sooner, and understand the consumer mindset, will be the ones that unwrap the greatest gift of Q4 – sales growth.

We surveyed roughly 240 people to get a sense of how they approached the holiday shopping season and observed some significant trends that will impact retailers during the 2017 shopping season.

Key insight #1

Poor UX is a holiday deal breaker.



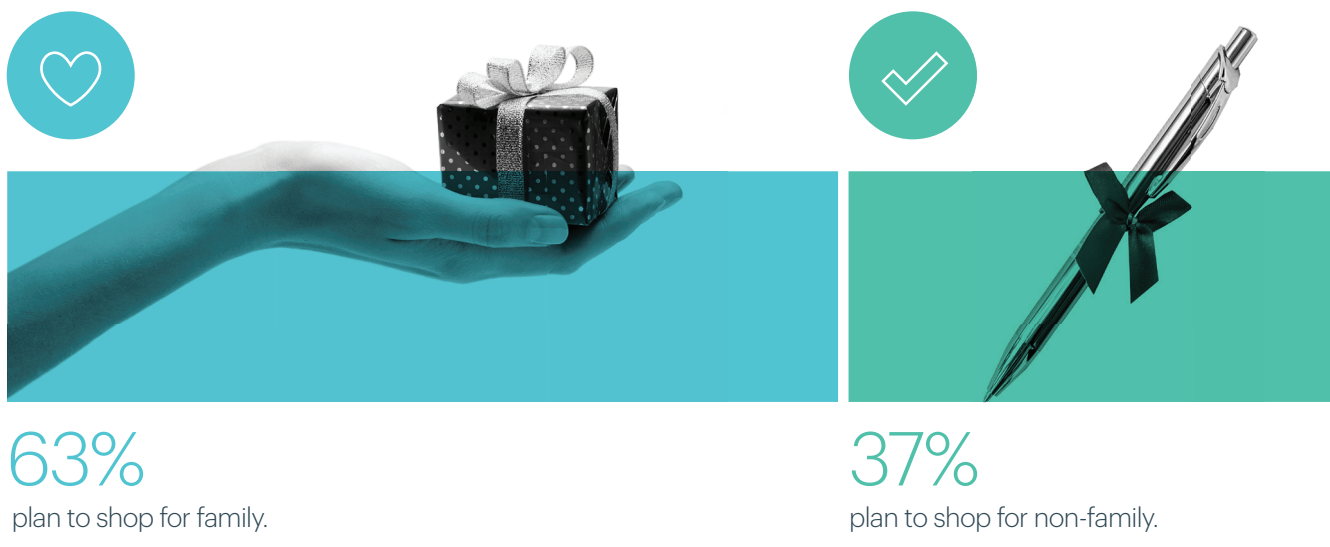
There's a reason wrapping paper is so thin; it makes it easier to open the gift. Similarly, customers are looking for an easy and enjoyable holiday shopping experience. Shoppers expect simplicity, so it's crucial that retailers provide the easiest shopping experience possible. Whether it's limiting the number of steps to get the promotion and complete the purchase or improving your online store's user experience, attention to detail and empathy for the shopping experience could have a big impact on your bottom line.

How to take action:

- Ensure you're offering friction-less check out.
- Do an audit of your current checkout process, and see if there is any aspect of it that you could simplify.
- Look at the whole promo experience, too, from offer recommended to offer used. Is the offer applied in cart or elsewhere?

Key insight #2

Family's first when it comes to buying higher priced gifts.



There's no place like home for the holidays and there's no group more important to shop for than family. The early bird shoppers of the holiday season tend to be the ones that are looking for the special, meaningful gifts that family members and loved ones' desire most. In general, these gifts also happened to be the bigger ticket items with a higher Average Order Value (AOV).

How to take action:

- Meet people where they are creating lists for family (Pinterest is big). Make it easy for people to 'pin' your products and click through to savings.
- Offer discounts on your big ticket items earlier than in previous years.
- Give your promotions more of sentimental and heartfelt tone to cater to the family-first shoppers.

Key insight #3

The holidays end, but the shopping doesn't.



Last-minute shoppers are nothing new, but what about the ones that are unapologetically late to the holiday shopping frenzy? These are the customers that blew past the eleventh hour and have no problem purchasing their gifts well after the holiday leftovers have all been eaten. Surprisingly, they're more common than you might expect.

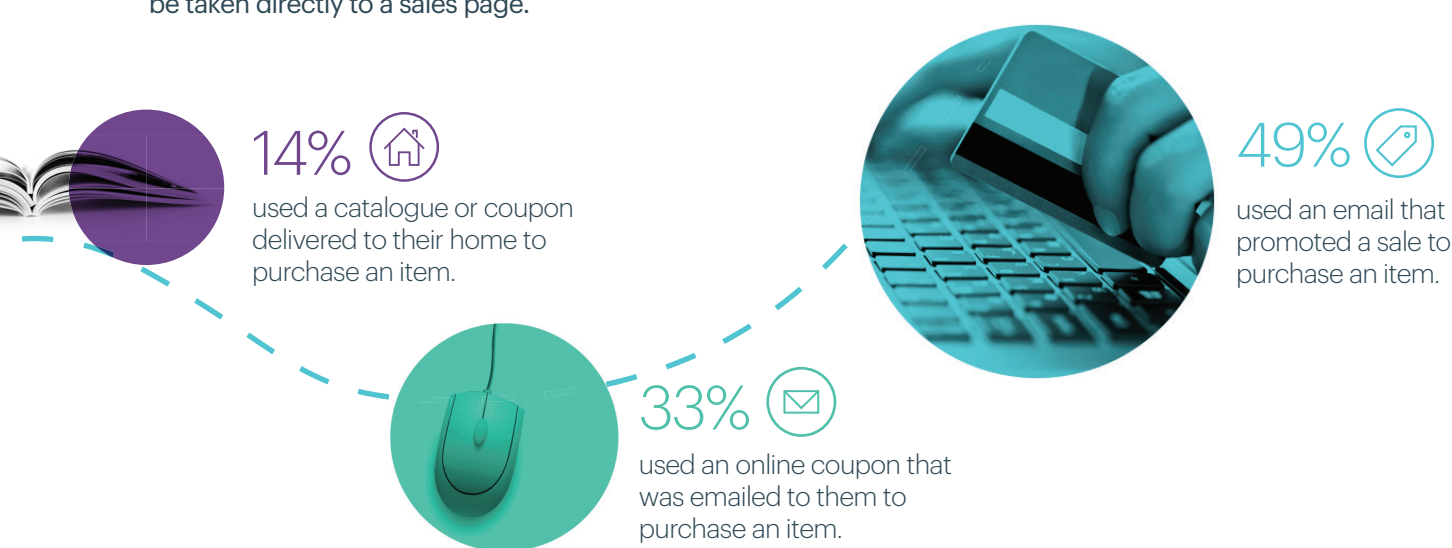
How to take action:

- Save some budget for the post holiday shopping blitz, and set up special promotions for this shopping group.
- Create shopping guides targeted to the 'unapologetically late' holiday shopper, and the self-shopper as well.
- Secure placements early to ensure prime placement in this typically untapped shopping season (or after season as the case may be).

Key insight #4

Avoid the mailbox and focus on the inbox for personalized promotions.

The days of sending out physical shopping catalogs and promotional cards have come and gone. Those surveyed responded that the least attractive promotion was "A catalog or coupon that came to my home." The most successful promotions are sent through email and feature a personal touch—something as simple as including the person's name in the email can go a long way to converting a sale. Convenience is a key aspect of digital promotions as well. Someone receiving a promotional email only needs to click a button to be taken directly to a sales page.



How to take action:

While these results speak to email, studies continue to show that social messaging is replacing email for the millennial generation. These results also continue to show the importance of personalization. Here are some channel-specific tips:

- Search: use keyword insertion tools
- Social: hyper target and speak to each specific audience with a specific tone
- Affiliate: consider personalized coupon codes as often as possible

In conclusion

Understanding your customer during this busy time of the year can lead to happier shoppers and better numbers across the board. Knowing what your customers expect and need could be the difference between someone checking out at your site versus one of your competitors.

Want to learn more?
Contact us at info@pepperjam.com

