



2017 Holiday Shopping

Essential Online Data on Customer Behavior, Device Trends and Conversion for Black Friday & Cyber Monday

New BrightEdge Research Report Reveals Holiday Shopping Data to Help Marketers Deliver Successful Holiday Shopping Season

BRIGHTEDGE

The Global Leader in Enterprise
SEO and Content Performance

989 E. Hillsdale Blvd, Suite 300,
Foster City, CA 94404
tel: 800.578.8023 | info@brightedge.com

www.brightedge.com

Introduction

The Christmas and holiday shopping season from November through December is a critical time to observe shoppers' online behavior. With several holidays and the most important shopping days of the year, this eight-week period in the United States, is filled with ubiquitous consumption messaging, massive discounting and general shopping euphoria. For retailers, it is a make or break time of the year.

To help retailers succeed during this critical time, new BrightEdge research provides data, and insight, about when, how and where people shop during the holiday season.

Specifically, the report provides unique insights into where customers make their purchases and when it happens. Brand marketers can better serve their customers and maximize returns this shopping season by familiarizing themselves with the insights BrightEdge has prepared based on the last holiday shopping season.

Key takeaways

Shopping is happening earlier

Thanksgiving Day may be the most important day of the year for retailers. BrightEdge research revealed holiday shopping is happening sooner and sooner and traffic spikes on Thanksgiving Day, especially on tablets. This suggests that consumers are in a buying mood before Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

Conversion rates soar during the Thanksgiving Day weekend

Ecommerce behavior changes dramatically on major shopping days Black Friday and Cyber Monday. On these days, conversion spikes. Interestingly, online conversion rates increase across desktop, tablet and mobile increase from Thanksgiving to Black Friday and into Cyber Monday.

- ❖ **Black Friday & Cyber Monday, conversion is double what it normally is.**
- ❖ **Cyber Monday conversion is higher than Black Friday conversion by 10%.**

Conversion rates fall one week before Christmas

Throughout the entire holiday period, conversion rates are **50%** higher, than non-holiday shopping times. However, conversion rates decline to pre-holiday levels roughly one week before Christmas as Christmas online orders cannot be shipped in time at regular shipping prices.

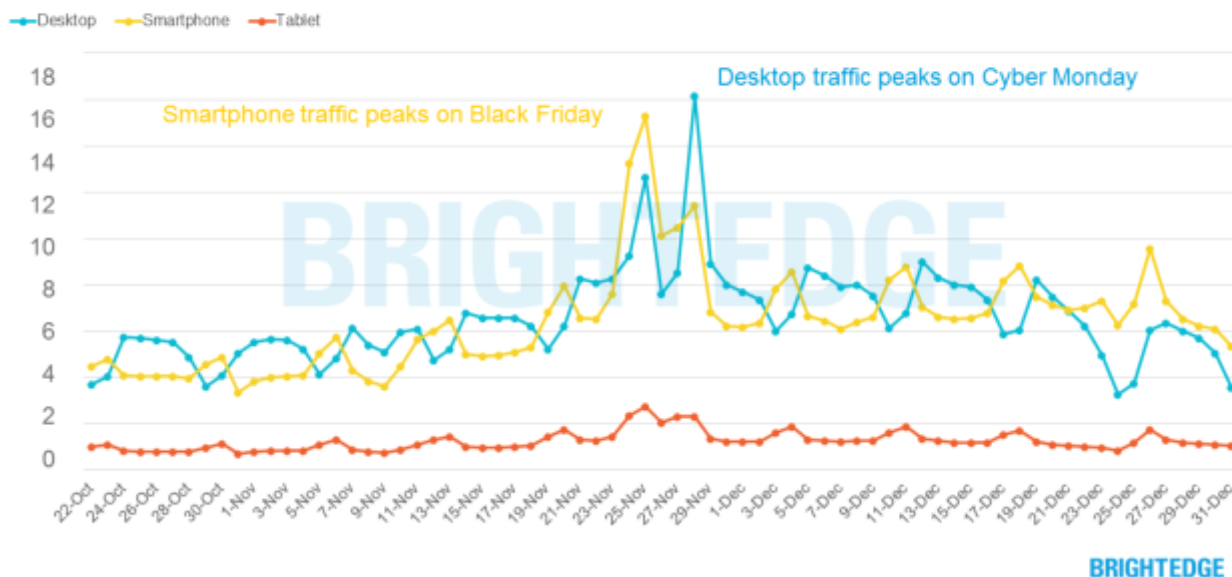
Desktop delivers dollars

Desktop still is **67%** of online shopping revenue because of higher overall desktop traffic and conversion.

Holiday traffic patterns

- Sundays are peak traffic days for smartphones
- Mondays are peak traffic days for desktops
- Smartphone shopping traffic exceeds tablet traffic **4X**

Holiday Peak Traffic Days by Device

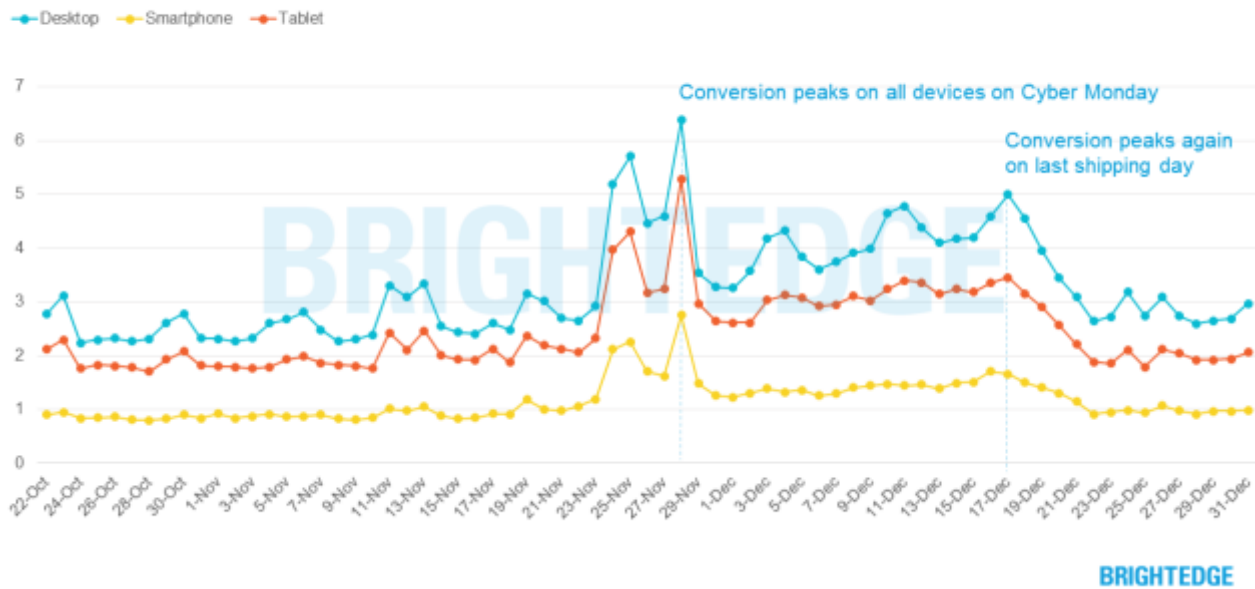


Variation in conversion over time(s)

Conversion builds to about **50%** higher than non-holiday shopping times until a week before Christmas.

Thereafter, conversion decreases back down to pre-holiday levels as Christmas online orders cannot be shipped in time at regular shipping prices.

Holiday Conversion Indexed by Device

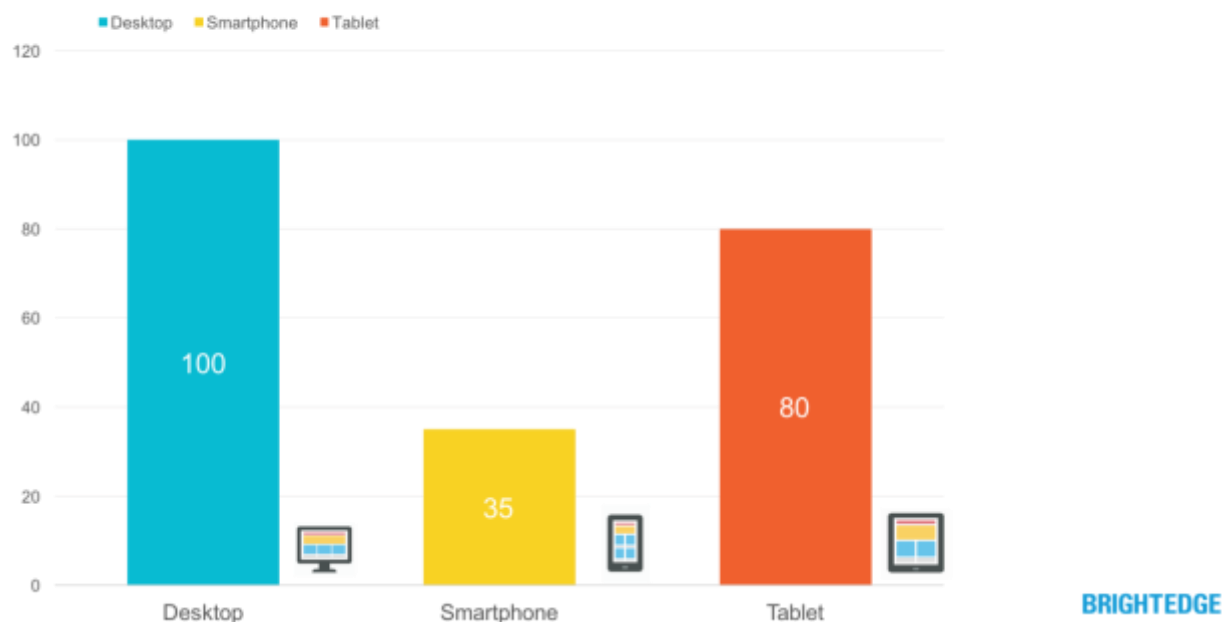


- ❑ On Black Friday & Cyber Monday, conversion is about double normal.
- ❑ Cyber Monday conversion is higher than Black Friday conversion by **10%**.

Research Methodology:

BrightEdge used its platform to aggregate and process the data. This was gathered from an analysis of 1.1 billion visits across nearly 3000 e-commerce sites (including Fortune 500 brands) over a 90-day period (from October 1st – December 31st 2016). The report data separates desktop, mobile, and tablet traffic by day.

Index of Conversion by Device



Tablet conversion is approximately [20%](#) less than desktop conversion and smartphone conversion is approximately [35%](#) of desktop conversion. Tablet screens are sufficient to get the purchasing job done so tablet conversion is close to desktop conversion. However, tablets still lack the convenience of a larger screen and the keyboard of desktops.

Smartphone conversion is [a third of desktop](#) conversion because of the comfort factor. The small screen on smartphones is challenging to view product information. The amount of typing in boxes during the checkout process is also a deterrent for conversion.

This should not be a surprise for some marketers because the smaller screen real estate makes it more difficult to see content for a potential purchase. Thus, larger purchases on a smartphone are riskier if the purchased product does not meet the buyer's expectations.

Tips for marketers going into the holiday season

The holidays provide plenty of opportunities to create more personalized content and provide intelligent experiences both at the store and online. As online retail spending increases over the holiday season, marketers need to focus on creating smart content and shopping experiences to attract, engage and convert customers at the right time

1) Create Content to Capture those Desktop and Mobile Conversions

During the holiday period, it is essential that marketers create and optimize content for both mobile and desktop. For example, with mobile, ensure your mobile configuration is correct and that you add images, icons, buttons and specific (seasonal offerings) call-to-action as part of the experience.

Many shoppers will be looking for holiday specials and deals as they go about filling out their shopping wish lists. If you run an online store or shopping platform, make sure you have plenty of content about upcoming deals and specials, holiday wish list must-haves and similar content published on your website or blog that will engage the visitor.

Content focused on holiday-themed keywords and special offers, coupons and discounts can help attract more shoppers and encourage them to buy. Promote this content across social media, and create content that is easy to share — top 10 lists, buyer's guides, and even something humorous will help you get a shopper's attention.

Be consistent about updating your blog with fresh posts and keeping tabs on trending topics to cover over the holiday season. This may be a good time to cover non-shopping-related news and other topics that might interest your target market — everything from tips for saving money before the new year to cooking and entertaining ideas can appeal to certain demographics and encourage them to stay on the site.

2) The Dynamic Duo: Organic and paid search campaigns

The key to holiday search shopping success is supporting organic efforts with paid advertising so that on-page SEO and content marketing are primed for conversion. Findings from BrightEdge [show](#) marketers should align organic search efforts to customer intent. Organic search and paid search marketers should work together to target terms where searchers indicate purchase behavior.

From Google AdWords ads to Bing Ads, accelerate conversions and sales with targeted paid search campaigns aligned with your content strategy or featured products. Companies in the business of selling toys or a certain brand of clothing, for example, can identify top-selling products that are making the “most-wanted list” for the holiday shopping season and build content and ads around those specific items.

3) Measure & benchmark: Continually optimize for high volume holiday weeks

Set up your mobile analytics so it reports key metrics separately from desktop data. Benchmark to industry standards and compare results to your competition. Test and analyze your shopping cart

and checkout experience via a mobile device before and after the holidays. Going in 2018 there is no better time to plan for next year's marketing.

When brands effectively measure the performance of their content, they can compare their performance with that of their peers and competitors. Celebrate the wins but note the performance gaps vis a vis the competition. Invest in a continuous process of improving what isn't performing.

4) Personalize: Activate content across “every channel at every opportunity”

Personalizing the sales experience can increase customer loyalty and engage the shopper at a whole new level. Retailers may be able to stay one step ahead of the competition by engaging customers at every touch point and making use of smart content and smart assets, such as associate-facing applications used in stores or interactive booths or screens for customers to “check in” to their store to earn a reward.

Personalize email messages with the shopper's name in the subject line and body; send personalized greeting cards via regular mail; and provide rewards or thank-you messages for visiting a brick-and-mortar store based on the shopper's latest purchases or social media check-ins.

5) Prepare for post-holiday sales

Purchases made right after a holiday may bring in more revenue than pre-holiday purchases. Some shoppers will be armed with gift cards or cash they received as a holiday gift or have been waiting for holiday sales markdowns all season long. Companies can take advantage of this second holiday shopping rush by advertising post-holiday sales over the holiday week, when many people are off work and traveling.

Social media networks, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, may be more heavily used during this time, since many people have the down time to browse social media sites — which means running targeted social media ads and extending offers to fans and followers could help drive a new wave of traffic to the site and checkout page.

BrightEdge research shows that, post-holiday, desktop falls and mobile and tablet increase. This supports the notion that when people are not working and are on the go over holiday season marketers need to serve content for them to consume and act upon on mobile and tablets.

Available on Demand: You can view our most recent Holiday Shopping webinar below



Holiday 2017: Insights and Recommendations to Help You Prepare

Capitalize on seasonality by making the right adjustments before your holiday code freeze.

<https://www.brightedge.com/resources/webinars/ecommerce-retail-planning-holiday-season>

With only a few months left before the holidays, it's time to make decisions about final experiments, optimizations, and refinements. Consumer behavior this year will be influenced by preference changes, improved mobile experiences, new user expectations – some of which you may not be thinking about yet. Moves you make in the next few months may have a noteworthy impact your holiday 2017 revenue. In this webinar, we will be using data and studies from this year to help you better-understand some vitally important topics, such as:

- Do faster pages' correlate with improved conversion rates?
- Do mobile users intend to convert like desktop users?
- How can user experience expectations affect your SEO and UX strategies?
- How do you create an actionable SEO SWOT?

About BrightEdge

BrightEdge, the global leader in enterprise organic search and content performance, empowers marketers to transform online content into business results such as traffic, conversions, and revenue. The BrightEdge S3 platform is powered by a sophisticated deep learning engine and is the only company capable of web wide, real-time measurement of content engagement across all digital channels, including search, social, and mobile. BrightEdge's 1,500+ customers include global brands such as 3M, Microsoft, and Nike, as well as 57 of the Fortune 100. The company has eight offices worldwide and is headquartered in Foster City, California.

For more information please visit BrightEdge at <https://www.brightedge.com/>

Read more on the BrightEdge blog: <https://www.brightedge.com/blog/>

Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/brightedge

Follow us on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/brightedge>

Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/seoplatform