

5 Ways to Outsmart Seasonal Slumps and Keep Your Online Sales Active Year-Round

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The ecommerce landscape is heavily influenced by the calendar year. Specific dates and seasons play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior and sales trends. Recognizing these key periods – holidays like Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, Back-to-School and Christmas – is crucial for online retailers aiming to optimize their marketing strategies and inventory management.

According to recent data, the holiday season in 2023 saw online spending increase by 6.3% year-over-year compared to in-store spending, which only grew by 2.2%. These periods often see a surge in consumer spending, making them prime opportunities for ecommerce businesses to boost sales and attract new customers.

As the CEO of Flowwow, a global gifting marketplace, I understand the challenges of seasonality firsthand. While our sales naturally peak around holidays, we've developed strategies to smooth out these fluctuations and ensure year-round growth.

Here, I share five key tactics to help your brand overcome seasonality and achieve sustainable growth.

1. Embrace product diversification

Expand your product or service offerings to cater to different yearly needs. Starting as an online bookstore, Amazon has become a retail giant offering everything from electronics and groceries to clothes and furniture. In 2023, Amazon's total consolidated net sales revenue amounted to 575 billion U.S. dollars.

During the pandemic, Flowwow transformed from a floral marketplace to a comprehensive gift-giving platform featuring local brands, resulting in a 77% year-over-year increase in orders. Initially focused on B2B ecommerce, it expanded its horizons with consumer-oriented platforms like Taobao and Tmall and ventured into international markets with AliExpress and cloud services through Alibaba Cloud. This diversification has fueled impressive growth, with Alibaba's revenue surging by a staggering 1692.56% from 2014 to 2024.

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2. Leverage the power of diverse markets

Businesses can create a smoother revenue flow by strategically targeting different markets with distinct peak seasons. For example, Flowwow has successfully leveraged diverse cultural celebrations across its 30+ markets. A Ramadan-themed card game campaign resonated deeply with consumers in the UAE, generating over 10 million media mentions. Similarly, campaigns aligned with Mother's Day in Spain reached a vast audience, underscoring the importance of cultural relevance.

Fashion retailer ASOS provides another compelling example. ASOS has optimized its inventory and marketing strategies by identifying seasonal variations in fashion preferences across different regions. For instance, the company ensures a robust

selection of winter apparel for markets in the Southern Hemisphere while catering to summer fashion trends in the Northern Hemisphere.

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3. Build customer loyalty through connection

Many bigger companies allocate part of their marketing budget towards 'customer happiness,' which proves efficient: consumers with high emotional engagement choose the brand 82% of the time. Positive experiences are the cornerstone of brand loyalty. Companies understand this, so they strive to foster closer interactions with their customers.

As for 2023, Amazon is second on the list of brand loyalty. Benefits of the service, like free two-day shipping, video streaming, and Prime Day sales, keep customers coming back. And Amazon consistently seeks to enhance customer satisfaction by improving its delivery and fulfillment systems and creating new merchandise.

Focus on a convenient interface, relatable deals, compassionate customer service, and high-quality service, and witness the growth of your brand's satisfaction score and the strengthening of brand affinity. A mere 5% increase in customer retention can lead to a staggering 25-95% increase in profitability.

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4. Plan for peak days in advance

Peak seasons offer growth opportunities, but they can strain resources. Analytics and forecasting are crucial to smooth out

expenses throughout the year. We base our spending on the previous standard month's income, allocating a portion for marketing and hiring based on performance.

Peak seasons can overload platforms. Unexpected bottlenecks can emerge while we prepare by analyzing load, conducting tests, and expanding capabilities. For example, a partner payment processor might be unprepared for the surge. Customer support is crucial during these periods. Our large customer support and online reputation management departments handle feedback. When negativity spikes, other teams, particularly marketing, are involved to address concerns. This is how we processed three million orders in 2023 with a 97% customer satisfaction score.

5. Create your own seasonality

Turn your low seasons into an advantage! For example, May-June is a traditionally slow period in gifting. Flowwow decided to experiment with the launch of a special campaign, Peonymania, and it succeeded. We found inspiration in a seasonal flower – the peony – focusing on its beauty and limited availability (FOMO effect). Thorough preparations resulted in a boom of a peony-inspired collection—over 2,020,800 peonies were purchased through Flowwow, with a record-breaking 4,309 sellers worldwide taking part in Peonymania.

While seasonality can present challenges, it also offers exciting opportunities for growth. By embracing product diversification, tapping into diverse markets, fostering customer loyalty, strategically planning for peak seasons, and even creating your own seasonal events, businesses can overcome these fluctuations and achieve sustainable success.

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