

12 Tips for Stress-Free Holiday Shipping

The year 2020 has been full of the unexpected, so wrap up the year on your terms by preparing for the holiday season with plenty of time to spare!



1 Start planning ASAP

Effectively planning for the busiest shopping season can majorly boost your potential sales. Don't leave anything to chance.

- ✔ **Improve based on last year.** While things were very different in 2019, you can use last year's challenges to set yourself up for success this year. Will you need to increase inventory, staff, shipping options or other resources?
- ✔ **Make a list and check it twice.** Keep adjusting your changes as the season gets closer and easier to predict.



81%

of consumers start shopping in November, but retailers and shippers are prepared by late summer.¹

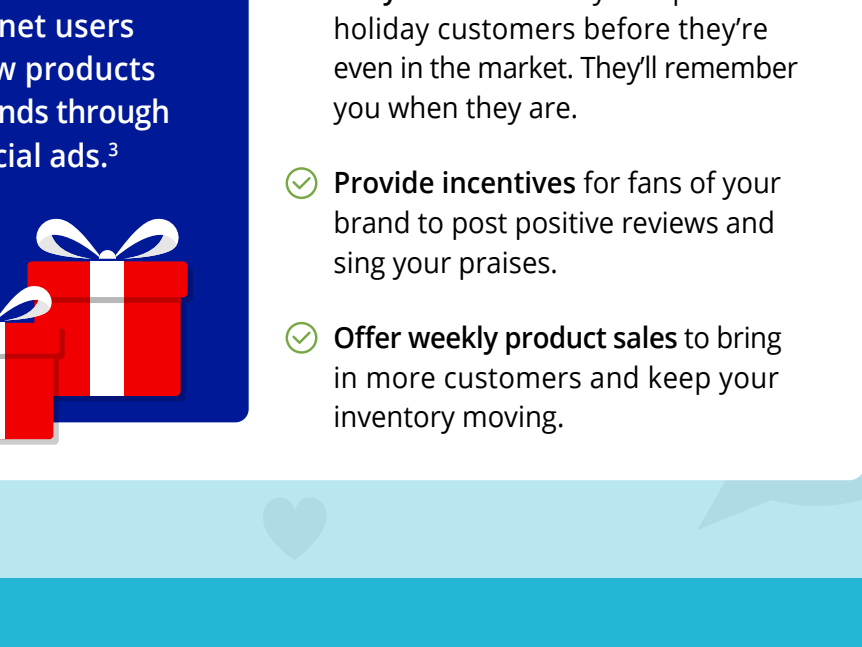
2 Set your site on success

Normally, digital channels account for about **13-19%** of all holiday sales. Online shopping has flourished due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, so make sure your website is ready for more customers than usual.

- ✔ **Optimize for Search Engine Optimization (SEO)** to make sure shoppers find you first.
- ✔ **Use analytics** to ensure those shoppers are engaged, right through to your checkout page.
- ✔ **Fix any shortfalls** in the user experience that stops them from completing a purchase.

30%

of global retail sales will be made online this holiday season.²



3 Make your social media sing



27%

of internet users find new products and brands through paid social ads.³

A strong **online marketing** strategy can increase sales when supported by a good social media presence.

- ✔ **Dial-up your social media game early** and meet the eyes of potential holiday customers before they're even in the market. They'll remember you when they are.
- ✔ **Provide incentives** for fans of your brand to post positive reviews and sing your praises.
- ✔ **Offer weekly product sales** to bring in more customers and keep your inventory moving.

4 Prepare for a sharp rise in pickup orders

This year, curbside, inside and even drive-through pickup options will be in high demand due to COVID-19 restrictions.

- ✔ **Hire temporary staff** to help fulfil orders in-store, manage store inventory and run a designated pickup station.
- ✔ **Train all staff** (old and new) ahead of time on any new measures you need to meet pickup demands.

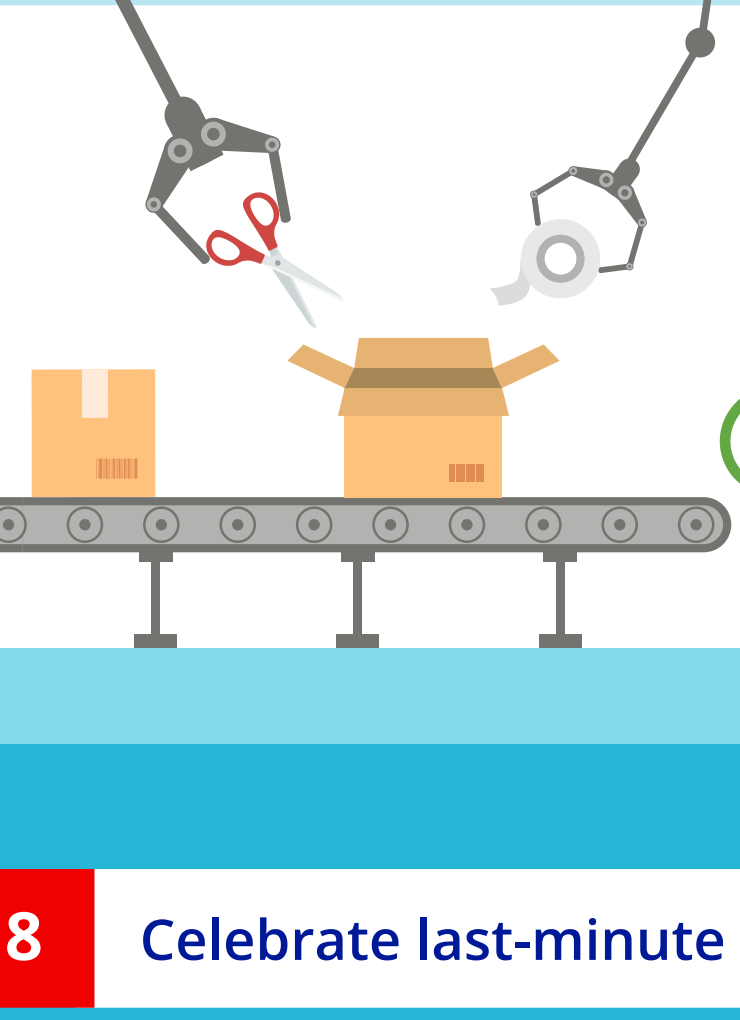
Still shipping a lot? Save some expenses with our article [5 Tips for Saving Money on Shipping](#).

90%

more pickup sales expected this year than the 2019 holiday season.⁴



5 Share your order deadlines well in advance



Help manage your customer expectations to build excitement and a sense of urgency.

- ✔ **Set specific deadlines** so you have a solid expectation of your abilities.
- ✔ **Ensure the date is visible** during the purchasing process and on your home page.

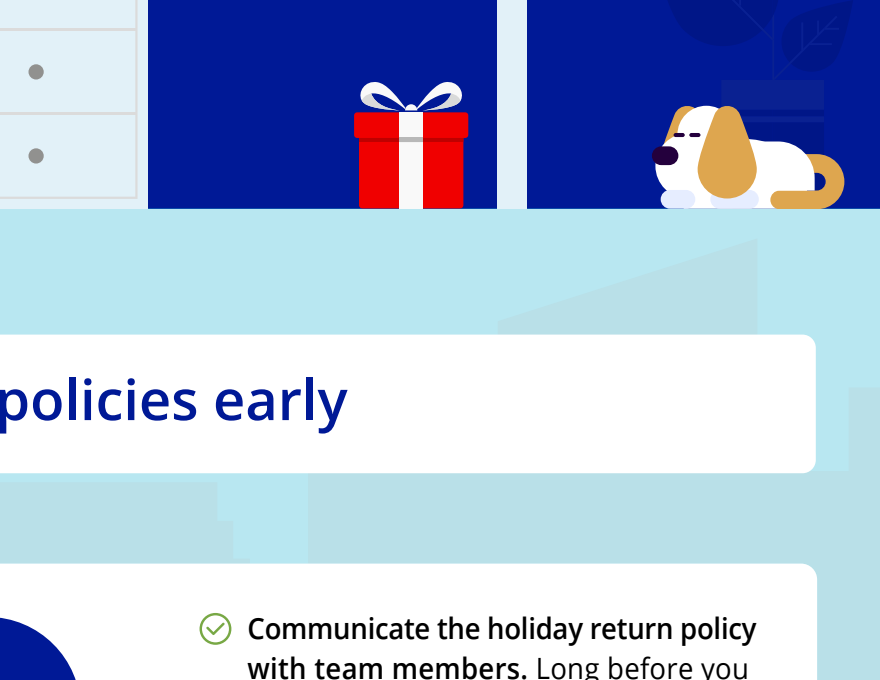
Here are Purolator's [send-by dates!](#)

6 Top sellers go to the front to save time

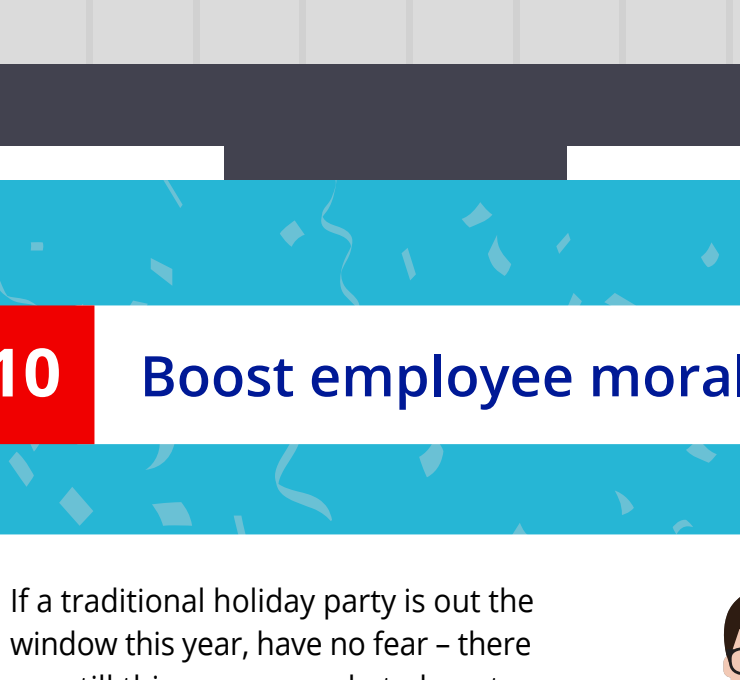
For speedy fulfillment, place the season's hottest-selling products close to packaging workstations.

- ✔ It may only save seconds or minutes on fulfillment but over the course of a busy day – or better still, a busy season – that time adds up.
- ✔ **Ordering your inventory** by popularity also helps you to view your less popular items and decide if they're worth their warehouse space.

Learn how to save time (and money) in our article about [retail order consolidation](#).



7 Stock up on materials



"We're out of bubble wrap!" is the last thing anyone wants to hear during the holiday rush.

Get packing and shipping materials in advance to beat the rush, save time and avoid delays in fulfilling orders, especially if they start coming in early.

Heads up! You can order the packaging you need directly from Purolator.

8 Celebrate last-minute orders

Last-minute shoppers are a big opportunity for businesses of all sizes. So, make sure you're able to fulfil BOPIS (buy online, pickup in-store) orders for the final rush.

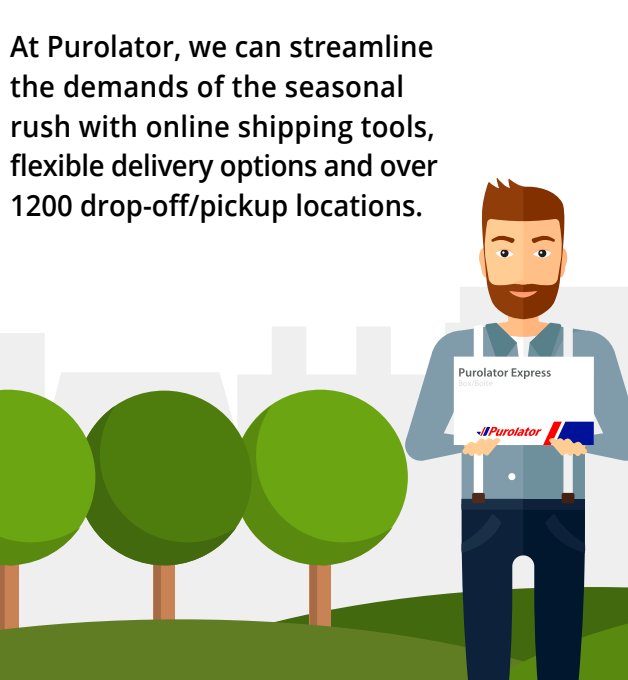
- ✔ **Prepare your staff** for a possible surge of orders.
- ✔ **Have back-up inventory** on well-performing items.
- ✔ **Frequently ensure your site** is up and running.
- ✔ ...And don't forget to breathe!

55%

more pickup orders happen in the last 7 days before Christmas.⁴



9 Review refund policies early



92% of customers said an easy returns process is an important consideration.⁵

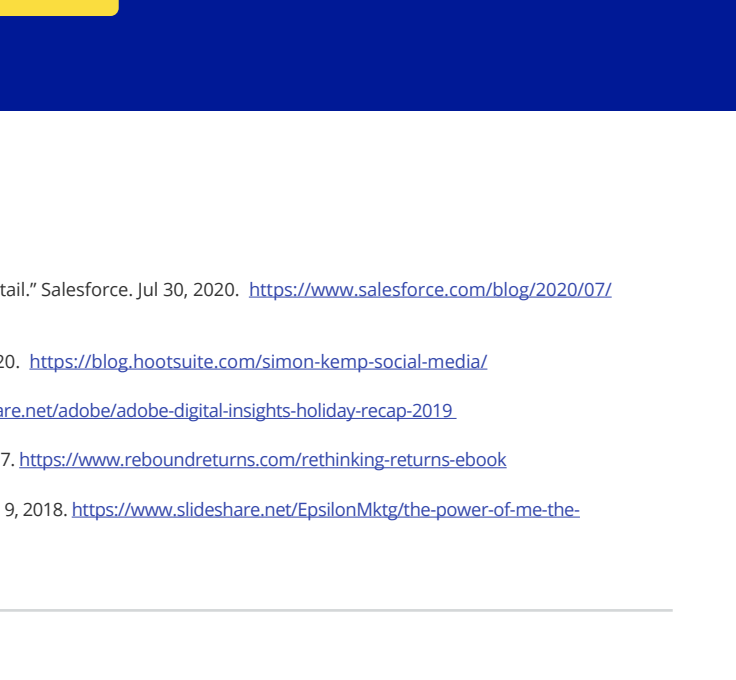
- ✔ **Communicate the holiday return policy with team members.** Long before you should deal with returns, your team should know how to answer any gift-related inquiries.
- ✔ **Provide easy-to-follow directions** on how to complete a merchandise return and the experience will be less stressful for you and your customers.

Psst! Check out our infographic [Checklist for Creating a Painless Returns Process](#) for tips on creating a seamless returns process.

10 Boost employee morale

If a traditional holiday party is out the window this year, have no fear – there are still things you can do to boost morale and build team spirit.

- ✔ **Decorate your home office** and show it off in a [virtual holiday party](#).
- ✔ **Support a staff-chosen charity** and match donations for a feel-good way to end the year.



11 Promote by personalizing

80%

of customers are more likely to purchase when a brand offers a personalized experience.⁶

- ✔ **Gather customer data** from customer service applications, sales databases and elsewhere to find out more about your customers' collective likes and dislikes.
- ✔ **Use customer profile data** to make online advertising more targeted and relevant, and segment the data so it appears in the right channels.

12 Ship with a trusted delivery provider

At Purolator, we can streamline the demands of the seasonal rush with online shipping tools, flexible delivery options and over 1200 drop-off/pickup locations.

1200+

drop-off and pickup locations

Find out how Purolator can help streamline the demands of the seasonal rush.

Contact us

¹ Purolator Annual Holiday Survey 2018

² "How COVID-19 Will Shape the 2020 Holiday Season: 5 Predictions on the Future of Retail." Salesforce. Jul 30, 2020. <https://www.salesforce.com/blog/2020/07/covid19-holiday-readiness-retail-commerce.html>

³ "More Than Half of the People on Earth Now Use Social Media." Hootsuite. Aug 10, 2020. <https://blog.hootsuite.com/simon-kemp-social-media/>

⁴ "Adobe Digital Insights Holiday Recap 2019." Adobe. Jan 11, 2020. <https://www.slideshare.net/adobe/adobe-digital-insights-holiday-recap-2019>

⁵ "Rethinking Returns. The Ultimate Guide to Customer Expectations." ReBound. March 2017. <https://www.reboundreturns.com/rethinking-returns-ebook>

⁶ "The power of me: The impact of personalization on marketing performance." Epsilon. Jan 9, 2018. <https://www.slideshare.net/EpsilonMktg/the-power-of-me-the-impact-of-personalization-on-marketing-performance>