



2021 PERFORMANCE TV HOLIDAY GUIDE

How to Drive Q4 Holiday Performance

We offer the best practices, stats, and insights that will transform your holiday ad strategy into a conversion-driving, revenue generating machine.

INTRODUCTION

‘Tis the Season for Performance TV

It's 2021 and if your Q4 ad strategy doesn't incorporate Connected TV, you may be in for a very un-merry holiday season. That's because more people are streaming television than ever before. By tapping into that surge in viewership you unlock a new, effective way to reach consumers with direct-response ads that drive site visits and conversions.

Last year saw a record Q4 for direct-response CTV advertising. MNTN Performance TV, our CTV ad solution, saw a significant uptick in activity across the board.

- Most active CTV advertisers
- Most campaigns launched
- Most impressions served
- Most revenue generated
- Most conversions driven

This year will be even bigger, which means your competition will likely be on CTV. So is your strategy ready to take them on? If not, fret not, because we've prepared a holiday guide to Q4 that will have your Performance TV campaigns driving serious results. We'll cover everything from campaign strategies, to creative best practices, and even how to design the perfect landing page.

It's time to load up on some holiday cheer—let's dive in.

Table Of Contents

34 pages? That's a LOT of holiday guidance. If you don't feel like reading it cover to cover, don't worry—here's your key to skipping to the parts you care about most. Just click the headline and away you'll go.

04 The Q4 Landscape

08 Holiday Creative Best Practices

14 Campaign Strategy


15 How to Build A Tailor-Made Strategy for 2021

19 Ho-Ho-How to Launch Effective Prospecting Campaigns

23 What's the Right Way to Retarget Your Audience?

27 Measuring Success

30 Optimize Your Conversion Point

A woman wearing a red Santa hat and a red top is sitting on a wooden floor. She is holding a silver laptop in her lap and looking at the screen. To her left is a decorated Christmas tree with ornaments and lights. In front of her are several wrapped gifts. To her right is a large brown paper shopping bag with a red reindeer antler headband on top. A light-colored dog is lying on the floor in the foreground, partially visible. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter.

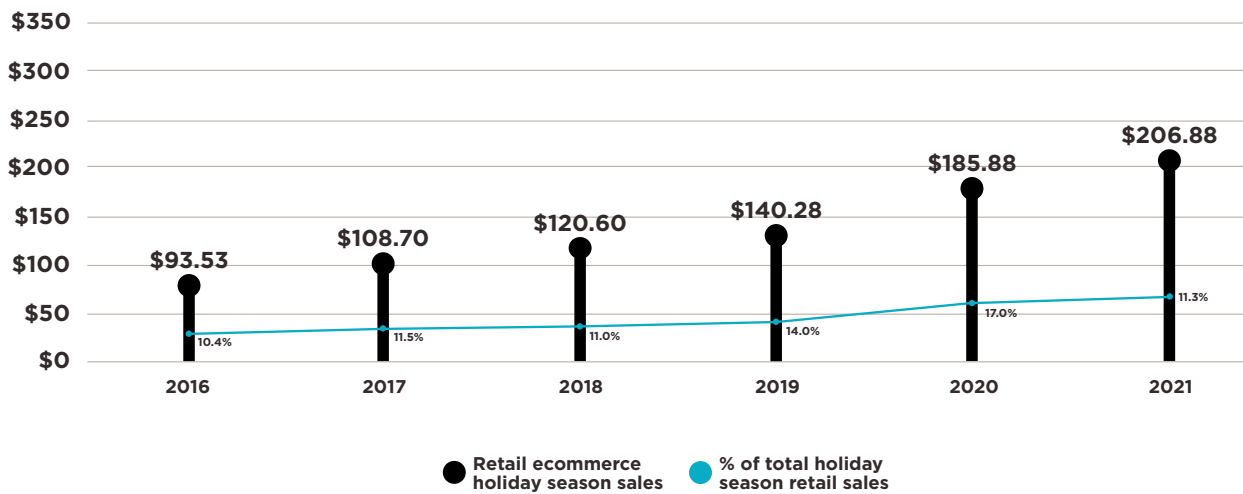
The Q4 Landscape

Holiday 2021 Forecast: Snow With Plenty of Spending

This year’s holiday season falls in line with what we’ve seen throughout the year in terms of customer spend and sentiment. The NRF predicts this year’s retail sales to grow from between 6.5% and 8.2% to more than \$4.33 trillion, a sign of increasing vaccination rates and businesses reopening.¹

Total US holiday retail sales in 2021 will surpass \$1 trillion, and ecommerce sales will increase 11.3% to \$206.88 billion.² Meanwhile, ecommerce’s slice of total holiday sales has steadily increased over the past few years and will account for almost 20% of total retail sales this year.³

US Retail Ecommerce Holiday Season Sales 2016 - 2021



Source: eMarketer, Feb 2021



Last Year's Big Q4 Winners

2020 was a solid win for overall holiday shopping, with sales increasing by 8.3% as shoppers used retail therapy to lighten their moods during the pandemic.⁴ However, there were a few categories that stood out among the rest during the holiday season

20% ↑

Building Materials & Garden Supply Stores

15% ↑

Sporting Goods

10% ↑

Grocery & Beverage

19% ↑

Gift Cards

While certain sectors struggled in terms of in-store traffic, the biggest winner of them all was online shopping, which showed upticks across all categories.⁵

Credit Card Purchases for the week ended Dec. 13, change from previous year

Retail Category	In-Store	Online
All Retail	↑ Up 0%	↑ Up 51%
Department Stores	↓ Down 34%	↑ Up 100%
Discount Stores	↑ Up 2%	↑ Up 57%
Electronics Stores	↓ Down 24%	↑ Up 145%
Grocery Stores & Supermarkets	↓ Down 1%	↑ Up 111%
Men's & Women's Clothing Stores	↓ Down 17%	↑ Up 8%
Sporting Good Stores	↓ Down 1%	↑ Up 37%
Wholesale Clubs	↑ Up 8%	↑ Up 145%

Source: Facteus



Direct-Response Performance Campaigns Thrived

All that online activity paid dividends for Performance TV campaigns last Q4. Advertisers who tapped into Connected TV to drive direct-response metrics like conversions and revenue saw significant increases across the board.



Conversions More Than Doubled

Advertisers across the MNTN network drove over twice as many conversions with Performance TV in Q4 2020 vs. Q4 the year prior.



Revenue Skyrocketed

Performance TV advertisers bested their Q4 2019 revenue by 208% in Q4 2020, proving it a capable channel to take advantage of an uptick in online shopping.



ROAS Rose on Average

Average return on ad spend rose 21% year-over-year for Performance TV advertisers.



A photograph of a family of four decorating a Christmas tree. A young girl is perched on a man's shoulders, holding a large star ornament. A woman stands next to the tree, also holding an ornament. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The text "Holiday Creative Best Practices" is centered in white.

Holiday Creative Best Practices

Crank Up the Intensity, Cut Through the Clutter

Every retailer, DTC, and service brand out there is running ads during the holiday season. That means there is a LOT of noise you will need to cut through.

Whether you're developing new creative, or repurposing existing assets, you'll want to utilize attention-grabbing tactics in your ads. We've assembled a list of best practices that will help you do just that across TV, web, and mobile.

Don't have TV creative ready for Q4?

We've partnered with QuickFrame, the leading video-as-a-service platform, to help countless advertisers produce high-quality video creative—both quickly and affordably. Our partnership guarantees preferred pricing on a number of packages to accommodate any budget.

[Learn More](#)



Connected TV Creative Tips

It's not enough to just run a video asset and call it a day. We've analyzed the creative strategies of top Performance TV advertisers to determine what's most effective at delivering performance.

♪ 2 CTAs, 1 URL, and a Partridge in a Pear Tree ♪

Direct-response ads need to tell the audience what to do and where to go, especially when served on a TV screen. Include a persistent URL throughout your ad, and both a visual and audible CTA at the end to prompt viewers to take action.

This makes a big difference—here's a comparison of advertisers who follow this advice versus those who don't.

Using a CTA

20%↓

Lower Cost Per Visit

85%↑

Higher Conversion Rate

Including a Logo and URL

11%↓

Lower Cost Per Visit

27%↑

Higher Conversion Rate

7%↑

**Higher Cross-Device
Verified Visit Rate**



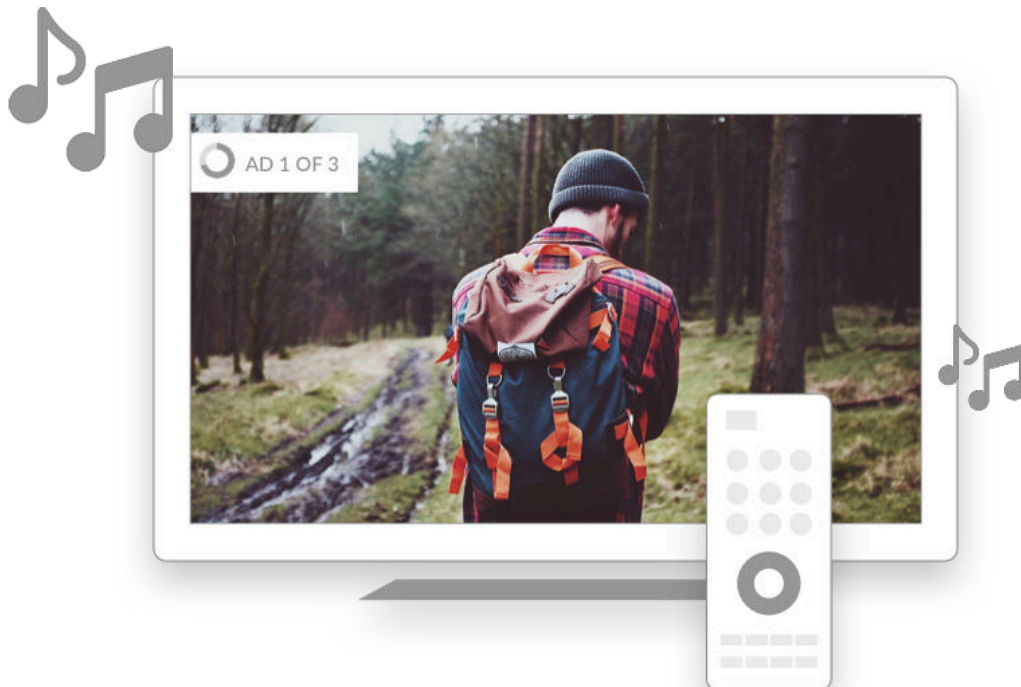
Connected TV Creative Tips (Cont'd)

Bring the Noise

Connected TV ads are sound-on, so take full advantage. Include music to draw attention to your ad, and if there's no on-screen dialogue, use a voice over. This can help breathe new life into existing assets as well; if you plan on reusing creative, add new music and a VO to give your ad an audible lift.

Lead with Emotion

Taking an emotional approach in advertising is nearly twice as effective as a rational approach.⁶ Studies show a positive correlation between viewers' attitudes (driven in part by the emotional message) and an ad's memorability.⁷ You're already halfway there if you advertise on TV—it's one of the best at building an emotional connection with your audience.



Web & Mobile (AKA Audience Extension) Tips

Performance TV campaigns are equipped with Audience Extension, which automatically serves related display ads across web and mobile to viewers who have seen your CTV ad. This helps immerse your audience in your message—here’s how to make the most of that opportunity.



Deliver a Consistent Experience

Match the look, message, and CTA of your display ads with that of your TV creative. This drives brand recall when they see your ad on other household devices, and can make a big difference when it’s time to buy.



Up the Urgency

Timing is everything, and adding a countdown timer to your display ads can help reinforce the fact your Black Friday and Cyber Monday deals are coming up (and won’t last forever).



Bring them Back to Convert

Performance TV retargeting campaigns unlock dynamic product carousels that feature items added to shoppers’ carts. Use these to bring them back to complete their purchase.



Trends To Keep in Mind

There are a few recent consumer trends that you should keep in mind while crafting your messaging.

Prominent Promos

Shoppers showed over the past year they're likely to prioritize value and convenience.⁸

75%

of Consumers Changed Something About the Way They Shop.

33%

Tried a New Shopping Method Like Delivery or Curbside Pickup.

1 in 3

Consumers Shopped at a New Retailer.

The primary motivation? Value, which included promotions, lower prices, and less expensive shipping. So if you have a Black Friday or Cyber Monday sale, make it known. If you're offering free shipping, make sure you mention it.

Provide Multiple Options

Shoppers tried multiple new ways to shop, so be sure to highlight different options you have on offer. Call out if shoppers can buy online, pick up in-store, or use curbside pickup.

Have Gift Cards? Let Them Know

Gift cards are popular with consumers; 49% of gift-givers planned on buying them in 2020, and 54% of gift-receivers wanted one as a present.⁹ A survey from payment service Blackhawk Network found shoppers anticipated spending about an average of \$313 on holiday gift cards.



A woman with long, wavy hair is wearing a white knit beanie and a white, fluffy winter coat. She is holding a white mug with a red and white pattern, likely containing a hot beverage. The background is a blurred, warm-toned scene, possibly a city street at night, with bokeh lights. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. Small white specks, resembling snow or rain, are scattered across the scene.

Campaign Strategy

How to Build A Tailor-Made Strategy for 2021

Consumers were estimated to spend an average of \$998¹⁰ on winter holiday shopping in 2020. It wasn't just on gifts—this included food, decorations, and other holiday-related purchases for themselves and others.

That means every marketer, regardless of their industry, has an opportunity to drive strong performance. To make the most of it, you'll need a solid strategy that's tailored to this year's playing field, and allows you to:

- Take advantage of this year's massive Connected TV ad opportunity.
- Avoid the pitfalls of social media apps' data tracking disaster.
- Cover the full sales funnel to drive awareness and conversions.

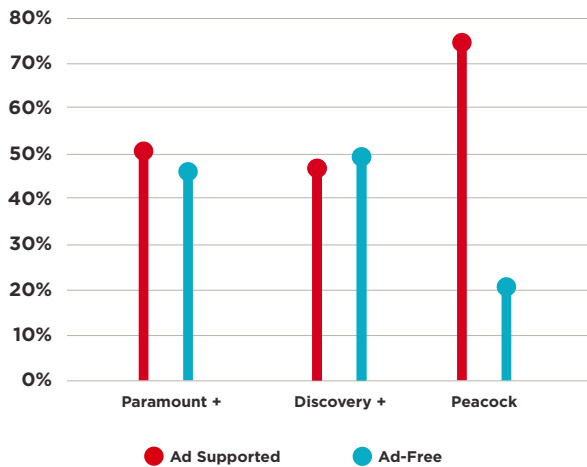


Ad-Supported Connected TV Wins Over Hearts, Minds, and Wallets

Connected TV ads need to play a role in your Q4 holiday strategy because their reach is getting larger.

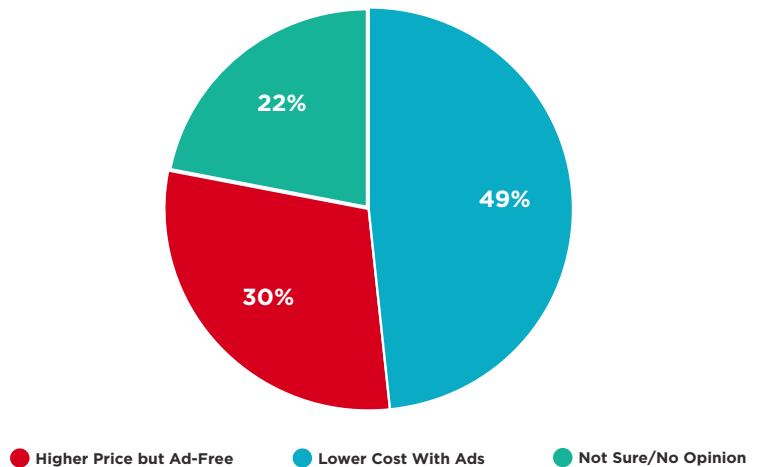
Plenty of new streaming networks have made recent debuts. Importantly, ad-supported tiers' adoption rates roughly equaled or outpaced ad-free subscription options. This falls in line with survey data, showing nearly half of viewers would rather subscribe to an ad-supported service. Viewer preferences are shifting from the old Netflix ad-free model to an ad-supported one. As of today, 80% of CTV viewers¹¹ regularly watch ad-supported content—and that percentage is likely to increase.

New Streaming Service Subscriptions by Type



Source: Morning Consult/Adweek Survey

What Type of Streaming Service Do Viewers Prefer?



Source: Morning Consult/Adweek Survey

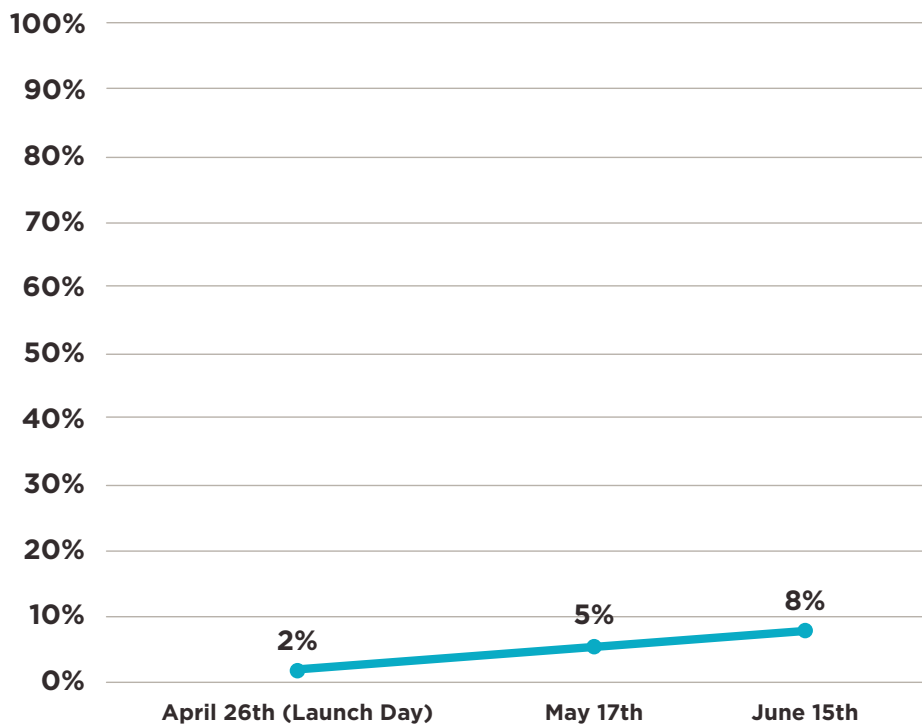


Don't Rely Too Heavily on Social

While opportunity grows on Connected TV, it's fading on social channels like Facebook. That's thanks to Apple's iOS 14.5 update, which requires users to opt in to mobile ad data tracking.

This can likely cripple advertisers' ability to leverage social for direct-response advertising. The restrictions limit targeting audiences and tracking campaign results like before—unless users opt-in. But opt-in rates are shockingly low,¹² and don't look likely to gain enough momentum in time for Q4. We recommend shifting direct-response ad dollars to Performance TV to make up for Facebook's drop in viability.

U.S. Weekly Opt-in Rate Across Mobile Apps



Source: Flurry Analytics



Cover the Full Sales Funnel

We highly recommend running both prospecting and retargeting campaigns together—especially on Connected TV. Targeting new viewers with prospecting, then retargeting them after they visit your site unlocks benefits that aren't available if you stick with just one type of campaign.

- You increase touch points on TV throughout different stages of the sales cycle, immersing valuable prospects in your message.
- Your touchpoints are better spent—as a viewer transitions from prospecting to retargeting, they'll receive fresh creative and messaging.
- Your messaging automatically evolves as your prospect moves further down the sales funnel, preventing ad fatigue.

It's likely retargeting is already part of your Q4 strategy, but it's important you bring it to television. Performance TV retargeting outperforms display-only retargeting, hands down.

Performance TV Retargeting vs Display-Only Retargeting

+47%

Average Visit Rate

-24%

Average Cost Per Visit

63% ↓

Fewer Impressions to Drive a Visit

47% ↓

Fewer Impressions to Drive a Conversion



Ho-Ho-How to Launch Effective Prospecting Campaigns

Your full funnel approach starts with prospecting. By leveraging third-party audience data, you can reach new-to-file shoppers, bring them to your site, and engage them until they convert. Performance TV prospecting campaigns allow you to focus on ROAS or CPA goals, in addition to CPV—letting you prioritize new shoppers who are likely to buy.

Here are some key considerations for creating and launching successful Q4 campaigns.

Early Prospecting Paid Off

Advertisers with prospecting campaigns active in September saw a major boost to both order value and site visits as those campaigns ran through October. Early touchpoints paid off as the holiday shopping season got underway, resulting in increased month-over-month site traffic and conversions driven by prospecting.

October Prospecting Campaign Performance

+198%

Order Value MoM

+94%

Site Visits MoM

Start in September

Normally we recommend launching prospecting 60 days before a shopping event like Black Friday. But with consumers shopping early on, your campaigns should be up and running even earlier to start generating crucial touchpoints.



Ho-Ho-How to Launch Effective Prospecting Campaigns (Cont'd)

Pull Performance Forward

Catch early-bird shoppers while simultaneously sidestepping possible shipping issues as the holidays ramp up. Supply chains are still feeling the effects of the pandemic, so starting early can potentially save you a headache.

Keep Budget Strong in November

Order values in November continued October's upward trajectory, with prospecting campaigns driving revenue even higher. Keep prospecting going strong to raise awareness and set up a strong December.

November Prospecting Campaign Performance

+71%

Order Value MoM

Prep Your Budget to Compete

Pace your budgets to stay competitive throughout the season. As the holidays wear on, increase your ad spend as more advertisers crank up the intensity—especially in the weeks leading up to Black Friday and Cyber Week.



Target New & Valuable Holiday Audiences

Building your Q4 prospecting audience strategy is a time to put your market research to work—who are your key demographics during this time of year? What are they interested in?

Take your ideal customer profile and match it with 3rd party audience segments. These are available via sources like Oracle Data Cloud, which is fully integrated into Performance TV—allowing you to map your customer data to a wide range of criteria, and build custom audiences right in the platform.



Location



Interests



Demographic



Purchase History



And More



Target New & Valuable Holiday Audiences (Cont'd)

Keep the following best practices in mind when building your audience Q4 strategy.



Tap Into Holiday Segments

Oracle Data Cloud features many seasonal audience segments, including Black Friday shoppers, Cyber Monday high-spenders, and other lucrative audiences that can deliver strong results.



Go Big and Experiment

There's a wealth of audience data available. If your goal is to reach as many viewers as possible, don't be shy about targeting a wide number of audience segments if they align with your ideal customer profile.



Keep In-Market In Mind

Include audiences that are “in-market” to include shoppers who are likely to buy now.



What's the Right Way to Retarget Your Audience?

By keeping your retargeting campaigns running throughout Q4 and beyond. Our data shows each month presents its own opportunity—with even January showing strength for lower-funnel campaigns.

October's Retargeting Opportunity

Conversions tied to Performance TV retargeting campaigns jumped significantly in October, especially in the final two weeks. This increase continued on throughout Q4—marking October as the time when consumers got serious about holiday shopping. Be sure your campaigns are running and ready.

October Retargeting Campaign Conversions

+98%

2nd Half vs. 1st Half of October

Timing is Everything

The two to three week lead up to Black Friday is prime real estate for grabbing shopper interest for your sales. Heavy up your ad spend during this time. We suggest 60-90% of your budget to be put towards prospecting, with 10-40% on retargeting.

Craft a Budget Based on Goals

The exact budget split depends on your identified goals for upper funnel (prospecting) versus lower funnel (retargeting). If you're focusing on efficiency or ROAS, we suggest spending on retargeting, but if you're focused on net-new growth, then put more spend towards prospecting.



What's the Right Way to Retarget Your Audience? (Cont'd)

Run, Run Retargeting

Keep campaigns live throughout December to reach last-minute shoppers and those looking to spend any received holiday cash or gift cards (shoppers spend an average of \$59 more than the value of the card¹³). Note increases 10 days before Christmas (when shoppers bought before shipping cutoffs), and in the days immediately after.

Notable December Conversion Increases

+13%

**Week Before Christmas
vs Month's Average**

+38%

**Week After Christmas
vs Week of Christmas**

Keep Retargeting into January

Advertisers who ran retargeting campaigns from September to January generated strong ROAS. January ROAS outperformed both October and September, and only dropped a small percentage in the high-impact months November and December. Keep your retargeting running through January to take advantage of shoppers looking to spend.

January ROAS

16%↑

**Higher vs
September**

21%↑

**Higher vs
October**

8%↓

**Lower vs
November**

10%↓

**Lower vs
December**



How to Retarget Shoppers Likely to Convert

By targeting viewers who have shown a high level of intent while visiting your site, your retargeting campaigns can influence shoppers' decisions to buy. We highly recommend you build your targeting strategy around site visitors like the following.



Cart Abandoners

These are shoppers who added items to their cart, but didn't complete their purchase.



2+ Page Visitors

Site visitors who spent time looking at multiple product pages have shown they're interested in what you have to offer.



X Time Spent on Site

Just like visiting multiple pages indicates interest, a lot of time spent on your site shows they're engaged enough to stick around.



Past Purchasers

A major chunk of a business' revenue comes from repeat customers, so be sure to include them in your retargeting strategy.

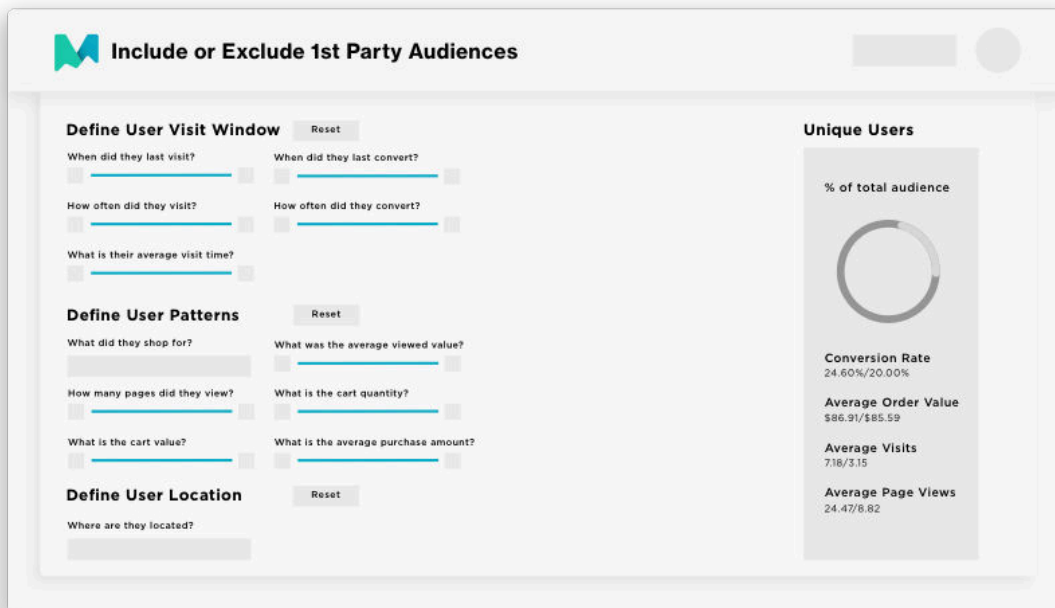


Tap into Your CRM

MNTN Performance TV allows you to upload CRM data so you can target your own first party audiences with CTV retargeting campaigns. This lets you target a valuable group of shoppers with loyalty campaigns, special offers, and messaging you know will resonate.

Repeat customers are valuable for a number of reasons, and your CRM gives you instant access to this lucrative group of brand loyalists.

- You can transform these customers into brand advocates, as repeat customers refer 50% more potential buyers than one-time buyers.¹⁴
- Repeat customers can spend up to 300% more than one-time buyers, and are more likely to trust you with high-end purchases.¹⁵
- Businesses are built on customer retention (the stats above should be proof enough), and you can now reach them with high-impact TV creative.



A man and a woman are sitting on a light-colored carpeted floor, surrounded by wrapped gifts. The man is wearing a dark sweater with a white geometric pattern and is smiling as he looks at a gift wrapped in red paper with white polka dots. The woman is wearing a white sweater with a red pattern and is also smiling. A dog is lying on the floor to the left, looking towards the camera. In the background, there is a Christmas tree and a bookshelf. The entire image has a green tint.

Measuring Success

Cross-Device Performance

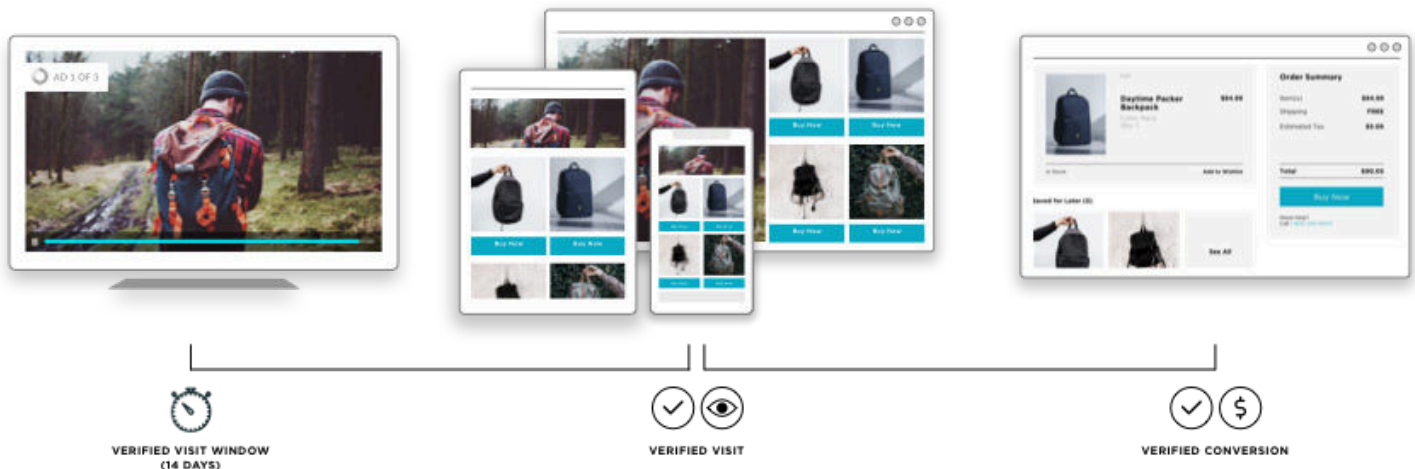
CTV advertising is cross-device by nature. An ad is served on a television, then a shopper converts on a phone or desktop, so you need a reliable way to measure that journey.

Performance TV uses Cross-Device Verified Visits, which is our proprietary technology that measures any user visits to your site following the guaranteed in-view display of your CTV ad.

01 User completes an ad (considered viewable by IAB standards) on a household device.

02 User visits advertiser site on any household device within Verified Visit window.

03 User converts within conversion window.



Customize Your Conversion Window

Your conversion window is customizable, so you should sync it with your sales cycle. A general rule of thumb is: if you have a more expensive product, the sales cycle is longer. If your offering is less expensive, a shorter conversion window is appropriate.

Fully Integrated with Google Analytics

MNTN Performance TV's Cross-Device Verified Visits allows you to measure and verify your Connected TV campaign performance alongside the rest of your performance channels in Google Analytics.



How to Track Your Wins

MNTN Performance TV was built to generate and track strong campaign performance. It provides access to key metrics in real-time, giving you a live view of how your campaign is handling Q4. Here are a few KPIs we recommend you keep an eye on for both retargeting and prospecting campaigns.



ROAS / CPA

These are efficiency metrics; respectively measuring revenue generated per ad dollar spent, and how much spend needed to drive a conversion. These are great for lower funnel campaigns, but can also be applied to upper funnel Performance TV prospecting campaigns.



Cost Per Visit

A popular choice for prospecting campaigns designed to drive traffic and promote growth. This tracks the average price it takes to drive a site visit, and the lower the number, the more effective your campaign.



Conversion Rate

A key metric for lower-funnel efforts, it represents the percentage of visitors who have completed a desired action. This is a great metric to use when comparing the effectiveness of direct-response ad channels.



Average Order Value

Total revenue divided by the number of checkouts, and provides insight into your shopper behavior and how much they tend to spend with your brand. Use this insight to better understand your customer profile.





Optimize Your Conversion Point

Build a Landing Page That Delivers More Conversions

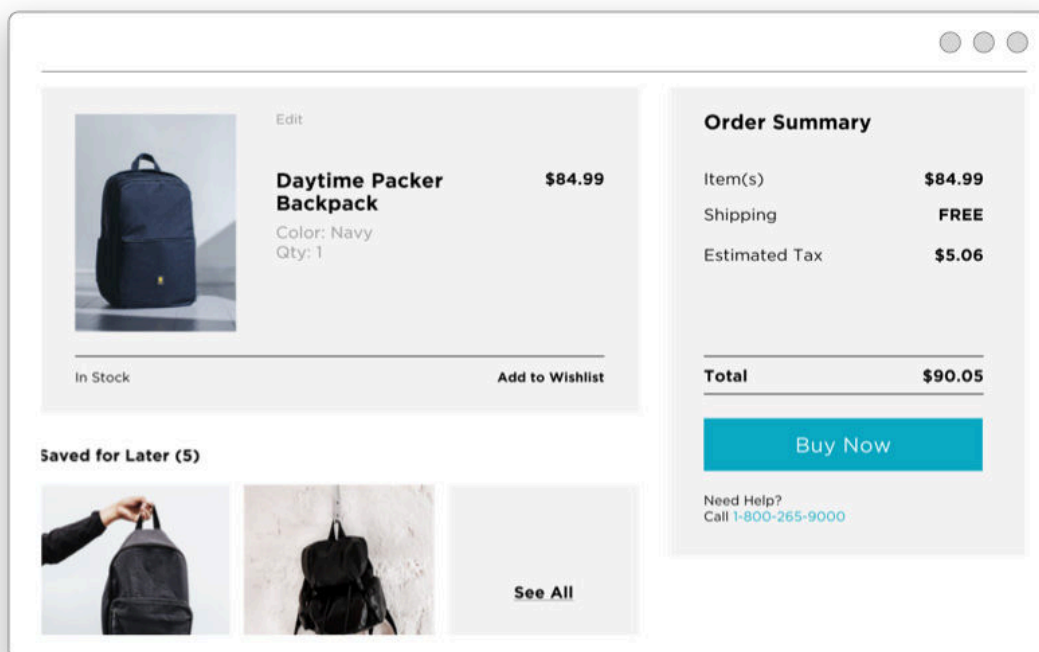
Your Connected TV campaigns have gotten people to your website, but what's next? Make sure your site is optimized for success so your performance metrics shine. Here are a few handy pointers to keep in mind.

The Scarcity Effect

Combine a call-to-action and drive urgency by activating a limited-time offer, displaying stock levels, or even a countdown ticker on your check-out page.

Fine-tune Your Checkout

Less is more, so remove any distraction like headers or footers and limit links that can result in a shopper leaving. Remove any barriers to entry that might make a user bounce off the page. For example, enable guest checkout and downplay coupon fields.



Build a Landing Page That Delivers More Conversions (Cont'd)

Guide Your Shoppers

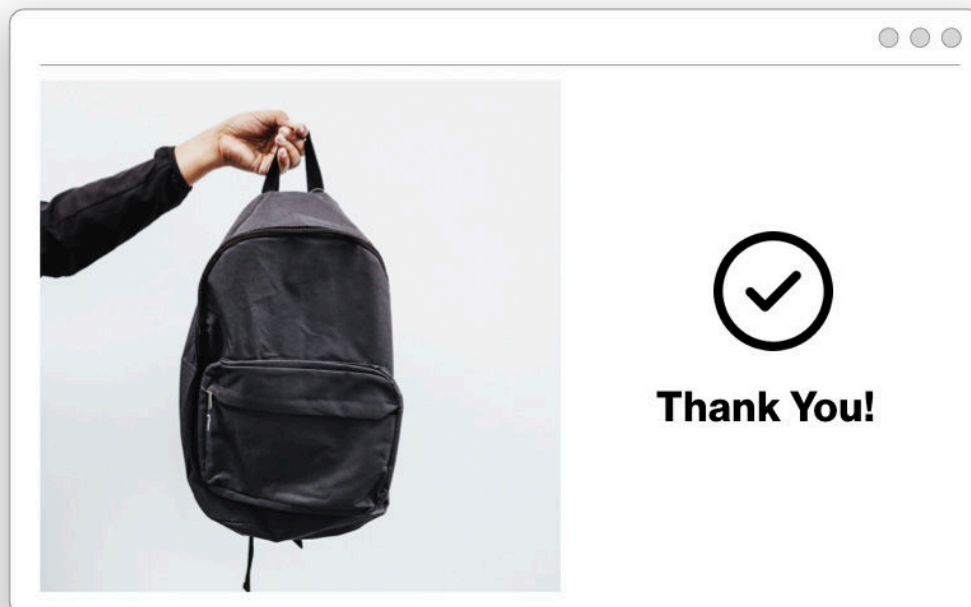
Utilize a progress bar to show the steps needed to complete checkout. An 'Add to Cart' button should be featured on every product detail page.

Make it Easy to Undo a Step

A browser's 'back' button can really hamper user experience, as it can wipe out all of the data entered when they're at the point of conversion. Make the button fully functional so that it preserves all of their information if they want to make any revisions/edits.

Don't Stop at Checkout

Add a 'Thank You' page after checkout featuring things like a brief feedback survey, an option to like or follow your brand on social, or an option to continue shopping. These features can yield repeat business.



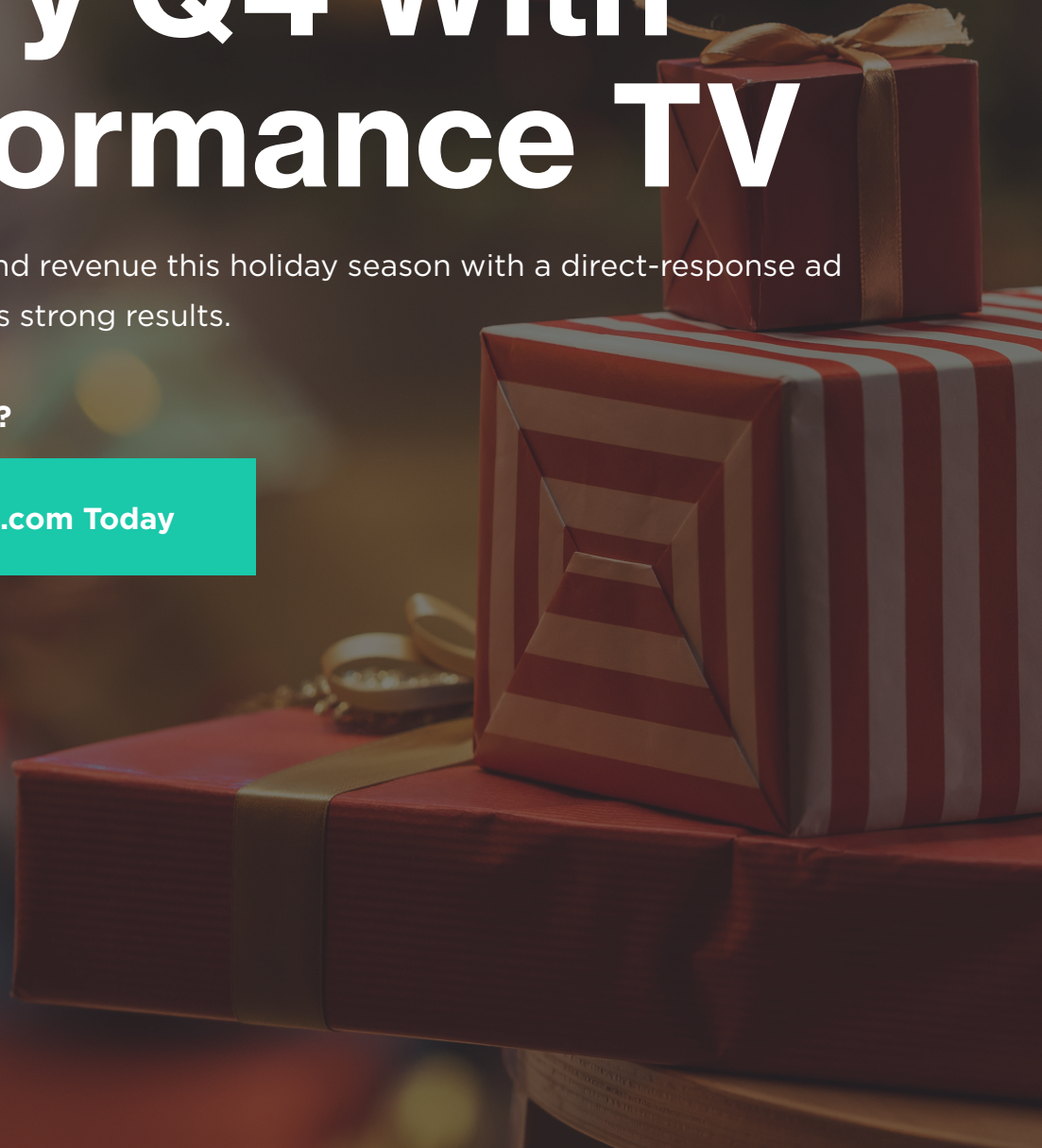
GET STARTED

Have a Very Merry Q4 With Performance TV

Drive conversions and revenue this holiday season with a direct-response ad channel that delivers strong results.

Want to learn more?

[Visit Mountain.com Today](https://www.mountain.com)



Sources

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