

# 2024 HOLIDAY ADVERTISING

Advertising and shopping  
trends to maximize your  
holiday campaigns



# Holiday shopping is changing... can marketers keep up?

## WHEN

Holiday shopping was once relegated to November and December with the bulk of purchases made during Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Now, retailers offer holiday events and deals as early as September to win the battle for consumer mindshare (and dollars) amid fierce competition.

## HOW

Consumers now seamlessly switch between shopping in-person and online via mobile, tablet, or computer. They're experiencing ads across multiple touchpoints and devices, which means that omnichannel campaigns are now table stakes. During a time when every brand is vying for consumer dollars, it's even more important for brands to reinforce their messaging across the media ecosystem.

## WHERE

The way people discover products has also evolved. Search on social and retail media is growing as new opportunities arise for marketers to reach engaged consumers. New [DISQO findings](#) show that 73% of people use retail sites to discover products — the same percentage as those who use traditional search engines.

## METHODOLOGY

DISQO surveyed 3,115 US adults (18+) from our first-party audience, July 25-31, 2024. Among this group, 89% (n=2769) said they planned to shop for the holidays. The data informing the report was balanced and weighted to represent the US population on age, gender, and income.

More than 2.3 million people have opted in to share their brand experiences with DISQO, empowering clients to cultivate deep insights about their target audiences and to perform objective, single-source measurement of ad effectiveness on attitudes and digital behaviors.


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## The bottom line

Advertisers must get creative about how they reach their customers this holiday season to break through the noise. This starts first and foremost with understanding how, when, and where people plan to shop this holiday season. In this report, we'll offer data-driven insights to help marketers effectively reach and resonate with holiday shoppers where it matters most.

# The 2024 holiday shopper

Let's set the stage with a demographic breakdown of those who said they plan to shop for the holidays this year, whether for themselves, for others, or both.

**WE ASKED**  
**Do you plan to shop for the holidays this year?** 

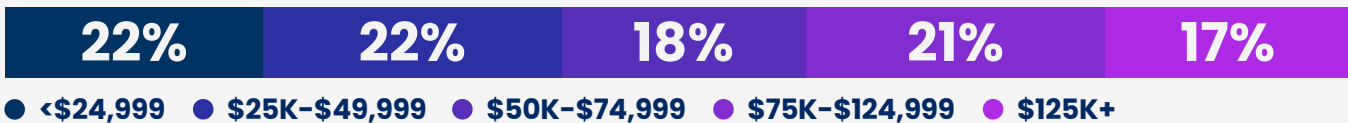
## Generation

Across generations, people plan to shop for the holidays. Millennials and Gen Xers make the greatest share, however Gen Zers and Boomers are not far behind. Brands have an opportunity to capture attention from a wide audience if they show up in ways that resonate across generations.

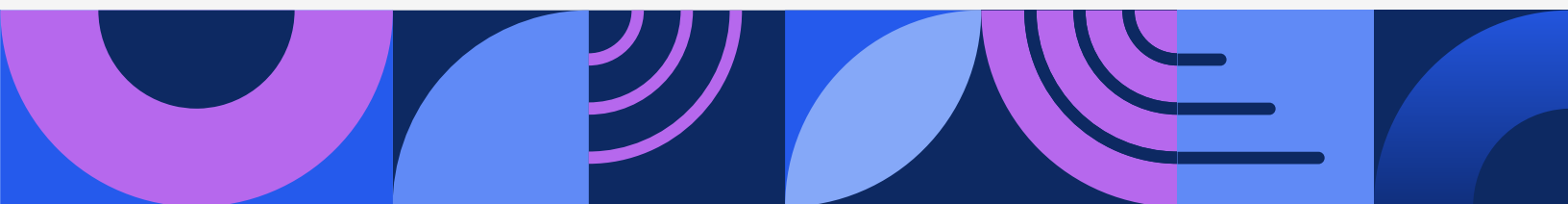


## Income

People across income segments also plan to shop this holiday season. The bulk of shoppers fall within the lower- to middle-income range. By focusing on this cohort while cultivating opportunities that attract upper-income shoppers, marketers and media platforms can optimize campaigns for maximum impact.



**37%** plan to spend more in 2024



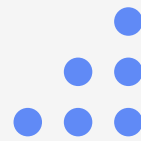
# An extended shopping season

On the heels of the Olympics and amid a contentious presidential election, advertising for the 2024 holiday shopping season is falling at an interesting time. Marketers must be mindful of when they launch their holiday campaigns to effectively position their brand in the seasonal craze.



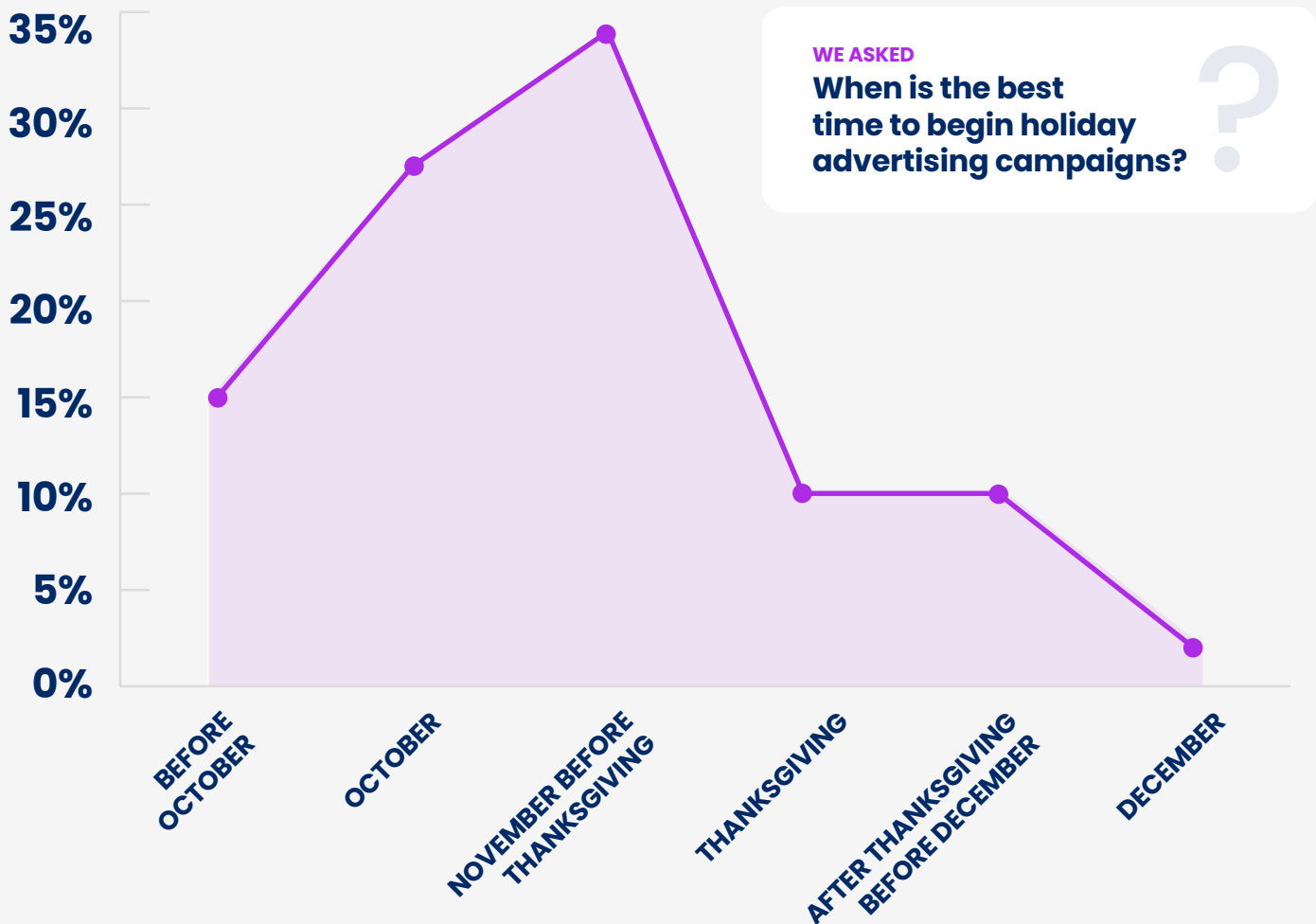
Marketers should be prepared to start holiday marketing early. Over half of holiday shoppers said they plan to start their shopping before November (52%). Nearly one-fifth said they would even start before October (18%). Another 40% said they would start shopping during November, with a focus on the first half of the month.

This doesn't mean that there aren't opportunities to capture dollars at the end of the season, though. The majority of holiday shoppers (55%) said they plan to shop through December. Overall, this means that marketers have more time to market to holiday shoppers and to position their brand as a holiday favorite.



# Campaign timing matters

So, when should brands launch campaigns? Too early and they risk missing the mark with the messaging. Too late and they risk missing out to competition.



While some people are open to holiday ads before October, the holiday shopping mindset really sets in when October begins as people seek gift guidance, inspiration, and deals. The sweet spot is early October through Thanksgiving (76%). Brands should tap into this prime time to reach customers from discovery to purchase.

**76%** think campaigns should start before Thanksgiving

# Thanksgiving's consumer influence

Thanksgiving Day represents a prime advertising moment for holiday shoppers. The Macy's parade, for example, offered [innovations](#) in digital advertising that enabled brands to reach the mass audience of parade viewers during one of the most memorable holiday events. However, do these placements actually move viewers to action?

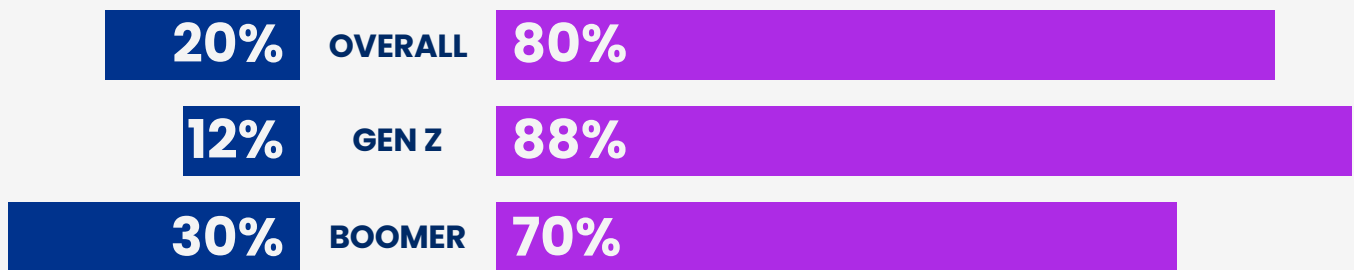
## WE ASKED

Are ads run on Thanksgiving Day influential on your holiday shopping plans?



● NOT INFLUENTIAL

● INFLUENTIAL



Overall, people said that Thanksgiving Day ads are influential in holiday purchase decisions with nearly half saying they were “very influential.” Younger consumers were more likely to say they were “very influential,” while Boomers were more likely to say “not at all influential.” Perhaps a reflection of their lighter Thanksgiving Day hosting duties, Gen Z’s receptivity to advertising on the holiday offers brands a unique engagement opportunity to reach them through traditional offline and digital media. Incorporating messaging around deals and savings can maximize ad campaign impact and drive young consumers to purchase, whether online or in-person.



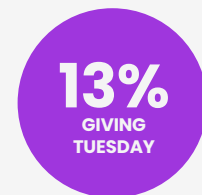
# Prime-time shopping

Traditionally, Black Friday and Cyber Monday dominated holiday shopping. Brands offered their best deals of the season and generated buzz around certain products or services. While shopping behaviors have shifted, these days remain a critical moment for marketers.

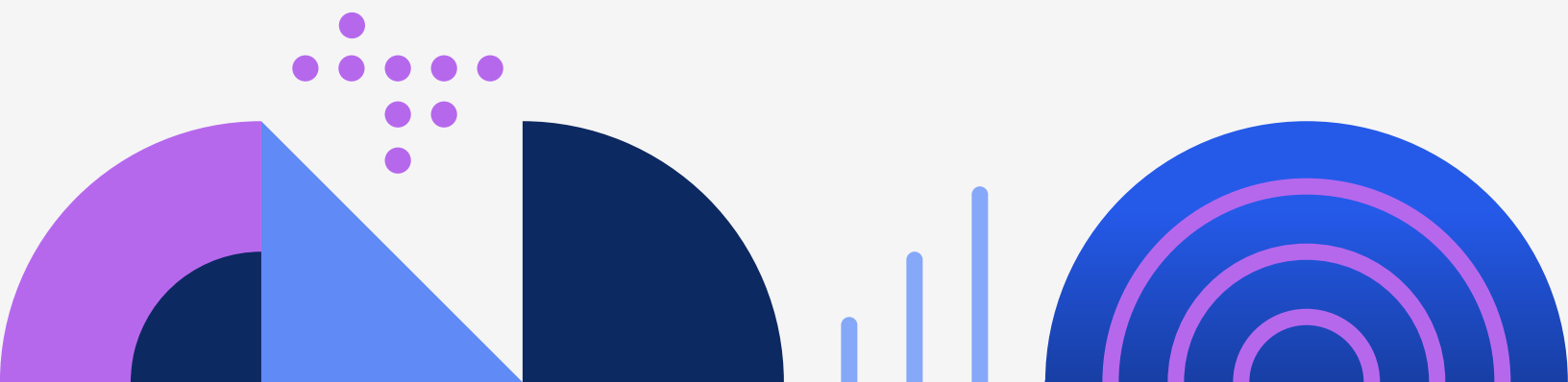
In-person shopping on Black Friday is still a major event for brick-and-mortar retailers, and not just for older generations. Surprisingly, Gen Z was the most likely to say that they were planning to shop in person on Black Friday at 52%. And, as we noted, Gen Z is more likely to be influenced by advertising on Thanksgiving Day.

WE ASKED

Which shopping dates do you plan to participate in for the holidays?



| 52% of Gen Z plans to shop in person on Black Friday



# Shopping days move earlier

Engagement with the traditional big shopping days has shifted likely because major retailers have introduced proprietary events earlier in the season to beat out competition. Most people (89%) plan to participate in at least one of these holiday shopping events.

## WE ASKED

Which of the following early holiday shopping events will you shop at?



Amazon's October Prime Day is the most popular event by far - likely because it has been established outside of the holiday season for a long time. Nearly half plan to shop Walmart's event and a third plan to shop Target's event. Across the board, retailers have captured consumers' attention as the holiday season ramps up earlier.

And, while Temu hadn't formally announced an early shopping day, 14% of consumers were still considering the new shopping platform for early holiday shopping bargains.

# 89%

said they plan to shop at least one of these early holiday shopping events



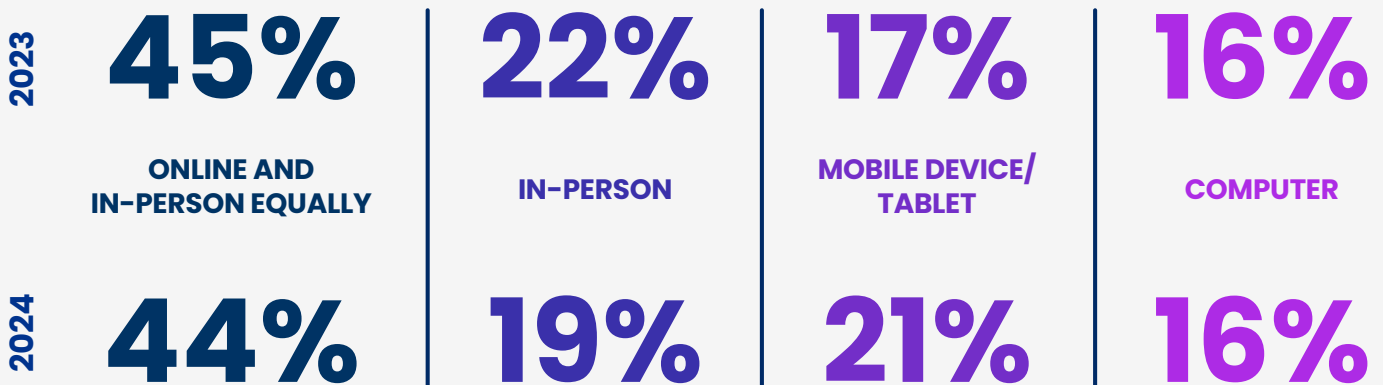


# Shopping across platforms and devices

Consumers are leaning on mobile and digital shopping more than ever. DISQO's recent [TikTok Advertising report](#) found that 14% of users make in-app purchases on a weekly basis, and another 15% do so monthly. How will this shifting behavior play out this holiday season — will people show up online, in-person, or both?

## WE ASKED

How do you plan to shop the most this year and how did you shop the most last year?



This holiday season will look much like 2023, with people split on how they plan to shop. They do expect to shop a little more on their phones or tablets. The largest segment said they shop both online and in-person equally, but about a third said they shop in-person only or online only. Among those who shop online, people are also split evenly between doing so via mobile and tablets or computers. Marketers can benefit by activating across both online and in-person channels.



# Sale discovery is a multi-channel affair

When asked how they prefer to discover holiday discounts and deals, online ads reign supreme, but TV, email, and social media are also popular.

There are some notable differences between younger consumers and the general population. They are far more likely to say social media is their preferred channel and far less likely to state TV and email as preferred channels. In-game ads are also more preferred among younger consumers, so marketers looking to reach this demographic could have an outsized impact by focusing efforts there.

## WE ASKED

How do you prefer to find out about holiday deals or discounts from brands?



OVERALL

GEN Z

44%



+3

ONLINE ADS

42%



-9

TV ADS

40%



-11

EMAIL

39%



+12

SOCIAL

35%



-4

IN-STORE PROMOS

26%



+0

FRIENDS

24%



+3

MOBILE APPS

18%



+3

TEXTS

15%



+4

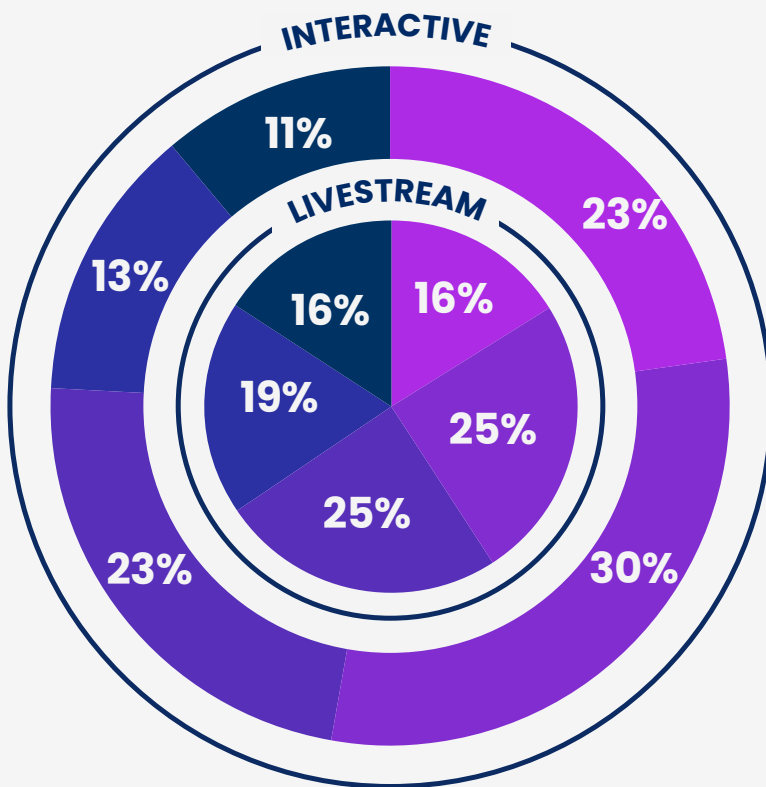
STOREFRONTS



# New engagement tactics for greater value

As every brand strives to win consumer mindshare, creative advertising and shopping experiences are necessary. While shoppers are still warming to new engagement tactics, added value influences their willingness to engage.

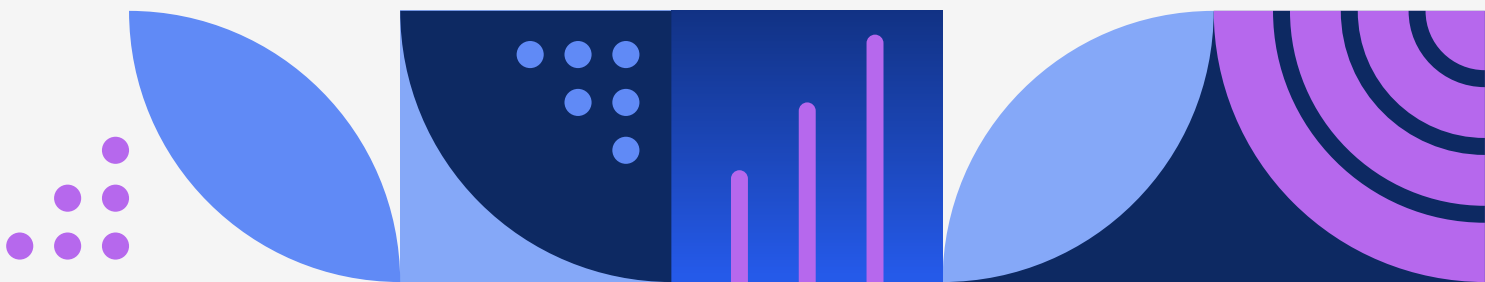
Interactive ads, for example, are growing in prominence on connected TVs as media owners offer new opportunities to bring shoppers into the marketing funnel. A little over half of holiday shoppers said they were likely to engage with these ads if they offer exclusive holiday shopping deals. Another quarter said they were neutral, offering marketers an opportunity to sway them.



- VERY LIKELY
- SOMEWHAT LIKELY
- NEUTRAL
- NOT VERY LIKELY
- NOT AT ALL LIKELY

Livestream shopping has also gained momentum during the holiday season. Last year, Best Buy [hosted](#) live shopping events where shoppers could browse featured products, ask questions, and add them to their cart. Are 2024 holiday shoppers likely to participate in these events if they receive value in return?

While a good portion said they would participate in a livestream event (41%), more people said they would not, when compared to engaging with an interactive ad. While there is slightly more reticence with livestream shopping, marketers still have an opportunity to win over neutral shoppers who represent about one-quarter of people for both shopping activations.



54%

51%

## The season's most coveted products

What products are at the top of shoppers' lists this year? Fashion items and gift cards are by far the most popular choices for holiday gifting. A third of shoppers cited electronics and tech gadgets. Travel falls lower on the list. This is consistent with our [Consumer Trends](#) report which found people would be pulling back on this category in 2024.

38%

WE ASKED

Which products are you considering purchasing for holiday gifts?



24%

22%

17%

15%

11%

8%

CLOTHING & FASHION

GIFT CARDS

ELECTRONICS & TECH GADGETS

BEAUTY & SKINCARE

FOOD & BEVERAGES

HEALTH & WELLNESS

ALCOHOL

TRAVEL

SUBSCRIPTION BOXES

# Winning holiday messages

Shoppers are inundated with messages from brands throughout the holiday season, so marketers must be mindful of what will resonate most with holiday shoppers this year. Cost? Convenience? Product differentiation? Here, we examine what messages will have the most impact in moving shoppers to purchase.

## WE ASKED

**Which advertising messages are most appealing to you while holiday shopping?**



“Free shipping” and “budget-friendly” are by far the most popular messages shoppers would like to see from marketers. As people lean heavily on online orders, they want to know that they can seamlessly exchange or return their purchases if they are not happy with the products. And, of course, money always speaks volumes.

Lower on the list are humor, sentimentality, relevance to the holidays, and personalization. The message is clear: shoppers seek value during the holiday season above all else. Marketers should carefully tailor their messages to emphasize what they can offer shoppers. A thoughtful message could go a long way in building trust with customers and winning over their business amid high competition.



# Driving shoppers to social purchase

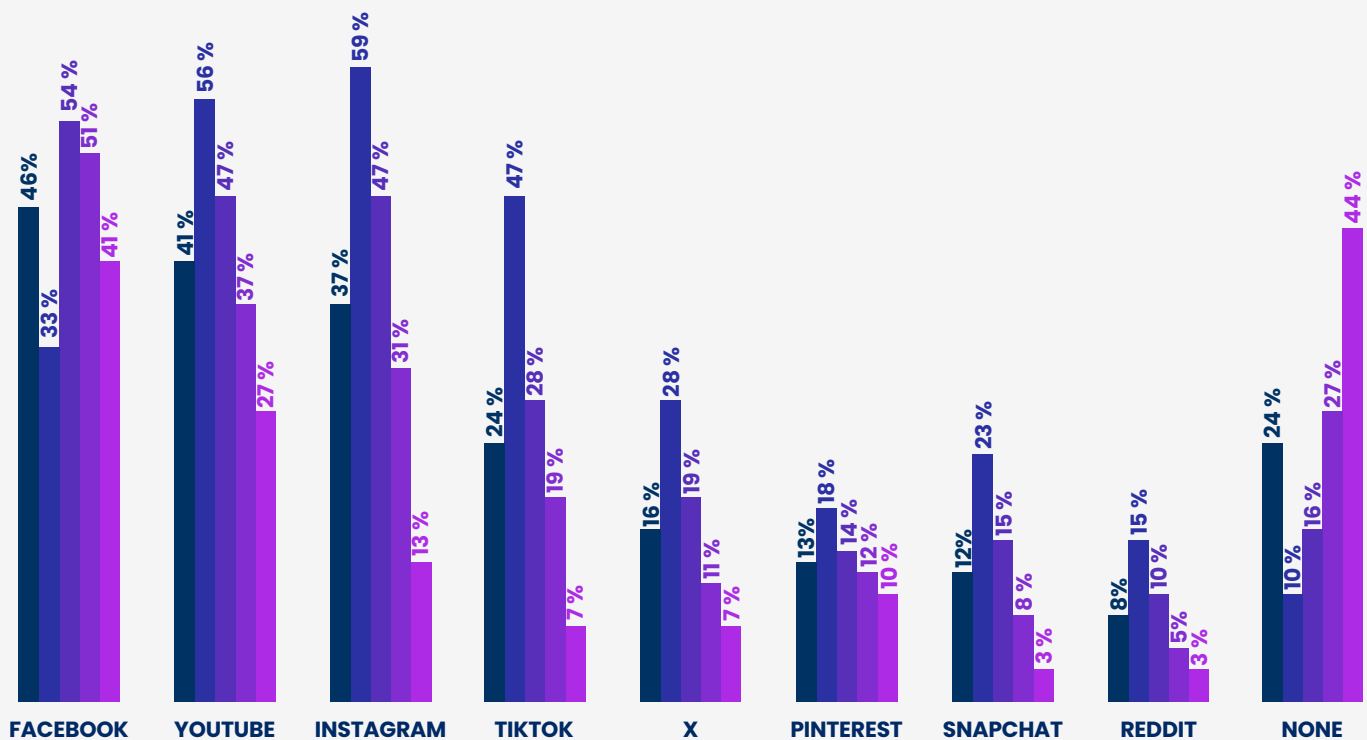
Ad investments on [retail](#) and social media platforms has grown as avenues for product and brand discovery. Both are doubling down on [search functionality](#) through new tools, AI capabilities, and video offerings just in time for the holiday shopping season.

## WE ASKED

On which social platforms have you seen a holiday ad that led you to buy a product?



- OVERALL
- GEN Z
- MILLENNIAL
- GEN X
- BOOMER



A majority of holiday shoppers (76%) have purchased a product from a social platform after seeing a holiday ad. Facebook is the top-ranked social platform for seasonal purchases. YouTube and Instagram aren't far behind, likely as a result of their visual focus which is highly suitable for product discovery.

There are clear nuances among the generations. Engagement across platforms decreases with age. Gen Z is most engaged overall, dominating TikTok usage in particular. Facebook is an anomaly, with Millennials most engaged, holding unique power among this influential cohort.

# Retail media's growing influence

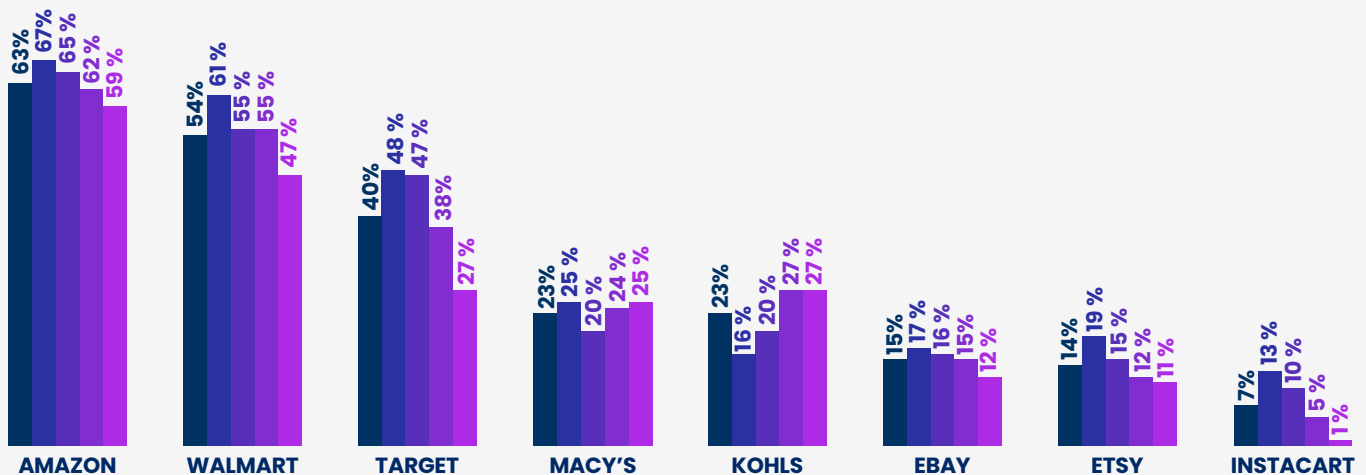
Retail platforms are changing the path-to-purchase. Non-traditional retailers are carving out space as ad networks, while brands are investing in on-site sponsored content and new ad formats to innovate retail experiences.

## WE ASKED

On which retail platforms have you seen a holiday ad that led you to buy a product?



- OVERALL
- GEN Z
- MILLENNIAL
- GEN X
- BOOMER



Eighty-seven percent (87%) of holiday shoppers said they have seen a seasonal ad on a retail platform that moved them to purchase. Amazon and Walmart have had the most impact on holiday purchases. Online marketplaces like Instacart, Etsy, and eBay are putting their [stake in the ground](#) in retail media, but the data indicates that they still have work to do to solidify advertising as a core pillar of their businesses.

Household names like Macy's and Kohls have held the most influence with older consumers, while new digital-first companies have held more influence over younger consumers. Brands should keep these demographic breakdowns in mind as they consider retail media investments for the holiday season to ensure they are reaching the right audience — especially given retail media's rapid growth and evolution.



# Product discovery and consideration

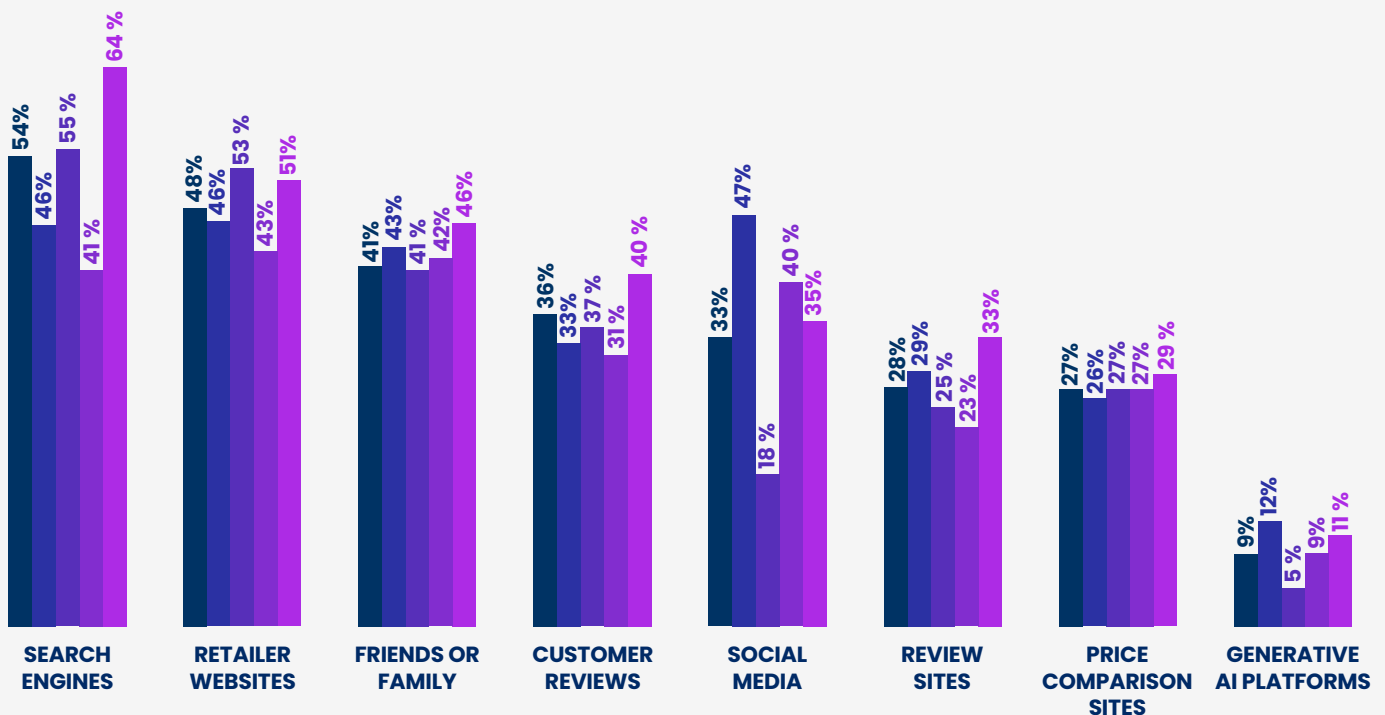
The way people discover products and make purchase decisions has changed. The rise of ChatGPT and other AI tools has introduced new search forums, while social media apps offer in-platform product browsing. Here, we examine how these new tactics stack up to more traditional search methods.

## WE ASKED

Where do you plan to research products that you intend to buy for the holidays?



- OVERALL
- GEN Z
- BOOMER
- <\$24,999
- \$125,000+



Search engines and retailer websites are most popular, especially among higher-income and older shoppers. Meanwhile, social is particularly influential among younger and lower-income consumers. Friends and family ranked as the third-most-used discovery tactic, showcasing the continued importance of word of mouth.



# Influencer power

Influencers also play an important role in product discovery. Does their influence hold the same weight during the holiday season? The data says yes. Half of holiday shoppers said that they're more likely to purchase a product recommended by an influencer they follow, particularly among younger and lower-income cohorts.

## WE ASKED

**If an influencer you follow endorses a product, how does that impact your likelihood to purchase it for the holidays?**



Gen Z is

**+17 pts**

more likely to be swayed by influencers

**14%**  
MUCH MORE LIKELY

**30%**  
SOMEWHAT MORE LIKELY

**39%**  
NO IMPACT

**13%**  
SOMEWHAT LESS LIKELY

**4%**  
FAR LESS LIKELY



# Takeaways for holiday marketers

## 1 Test and learn from your holiday campaigns

Everything about the holiday shopping season is changing... where, when, and how. Marketers need to employ an agile campaign approach and frequently retool their execution and measurement. This starts with bringing a deep understanding of consumer behaviors to the forefront of your measurement framework.

Marketers should consider aligning campaign timing with shopping plans, trying out different messages to see what sticks, and testing which channels pack the most punch for target audiences. Data-driven insights can help both in-flight optimization and post-campaign strategic work.

## 2 Zero in on the metrics that matter most for your business

Marketers meet customers across multiple touchpoints during the holiday season — and each touchpoint plays a different role in moving them through the marketing funnel. While holiday advertising is a brand-building opportunity, it's one of the most important times to drive performance.

For this reason, setting clear goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) is foundational to effective campaign execution. Developing a measurement framework that objectively reveals your campaign's impact and identifies incremental lift is paramount. Marketers who leverage these insights to optimize year-over-year as goals evolve will win.

## 3 Find a cross-platform measurement partner to make the most of your holiday advertising investments

Holiday shoppers are engaging with brands across multiple screens, channels, and platforms. Marketers must show up consistently across channels and work with a partner that can break down silos. Cross-platform analysis will demonstrate how different platforms work together to deliver against your holiday campaign goals and provide a holistic view of the impact. This is particularly important as new channels, such as retail media, grow. Identifying a partner that can measure the value of exposure in a fragmented digital environment provides a competitive edge when marketers need it most.

# Advertising Measurement

WITH  DISQO

## BRAND LIFT & OUTCOMES LIFT

DISQO provides holistic ad measurement with a single-source, identity-based methodology. Our Brand Lift product enables cross-platform measurement of attitudinal lift on KPIs like awareness, consideration, and favorability. Our Outcomes Lift product uniquely adds measurement of post-ad exposure digital behaviors like search, site visits, and e-commerce activities. Combined, these products give a complete picture of full-funnel advertising effectiveness.



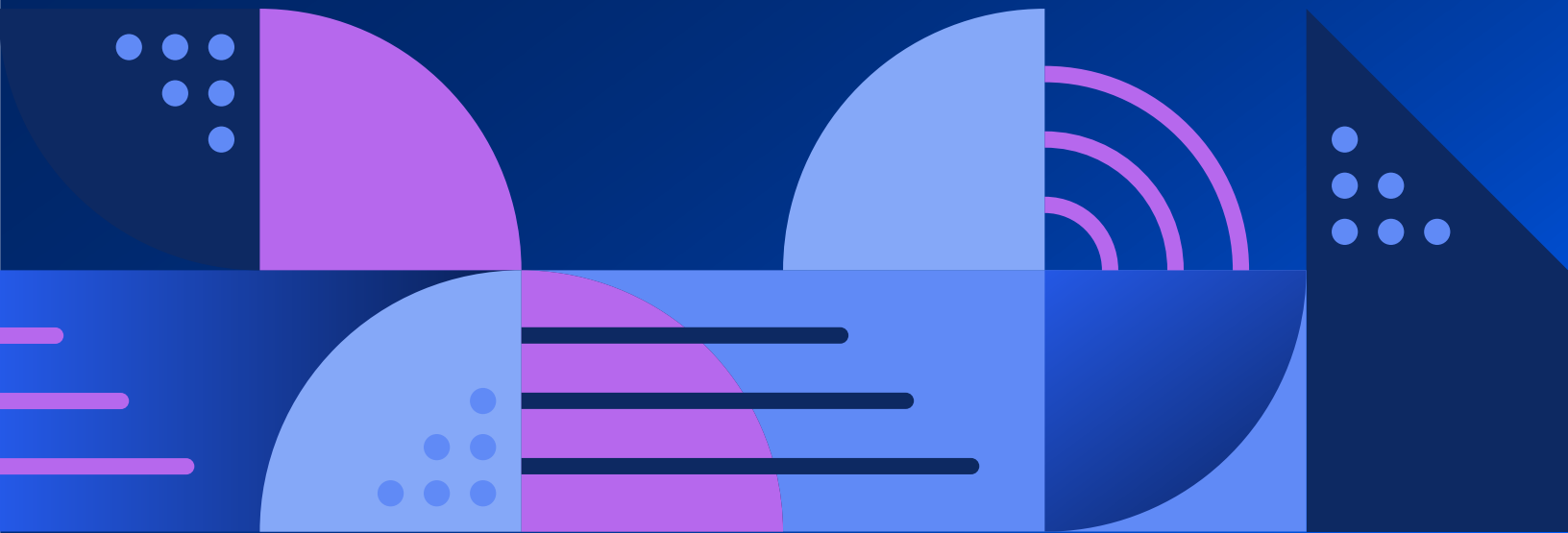
### BRANDS & AGENCIES

At a time when media spend is under scrutiny, DISQO reveals exactly how advertising drives tangible business outcomes and, importantly, which channels are moving the needle most. This allows you to prove the effectiveness of investments and make valuable ROI optimizations.



### MEDIA PLATFORMS

Media platforms today need to prove how their content delivers against campaign goals. DISQO offers measurement of consumer actions post-ad exposure once the consumer leaves your domain. This enables powerful conclusions about performance so you can get proper attribution for the efficacy of your media and ad formats.



# Measure your holiday campaigns with DISQO!

## LET'S TALK

 [hello@disqo.com](mailto:hello@disqo.com)

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