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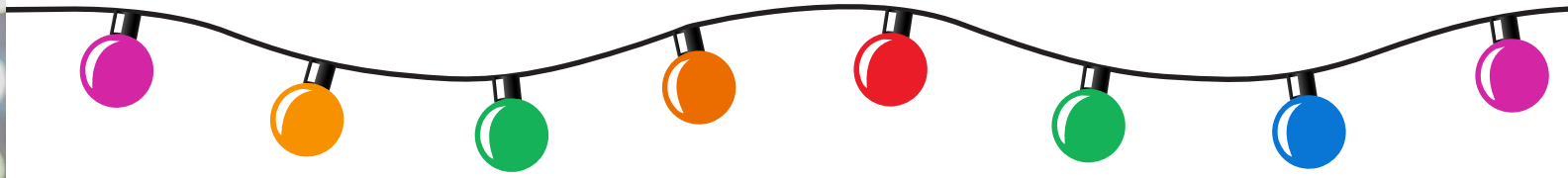
# 2024 holiday retail trends

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Enhancing the customer experience







The holiday shopping season is a crucial time for retailers, and understanding consumer behavior is the key to success. To help you get ahead as you prepare for the 2024 season, we've gathered valuable data and surveyed consumers since last season.

This guide dives deeper into these insights to help you better understand when and how your customers shop, so you can refine your strategies for the upcoming holiday season.



## TREND #1

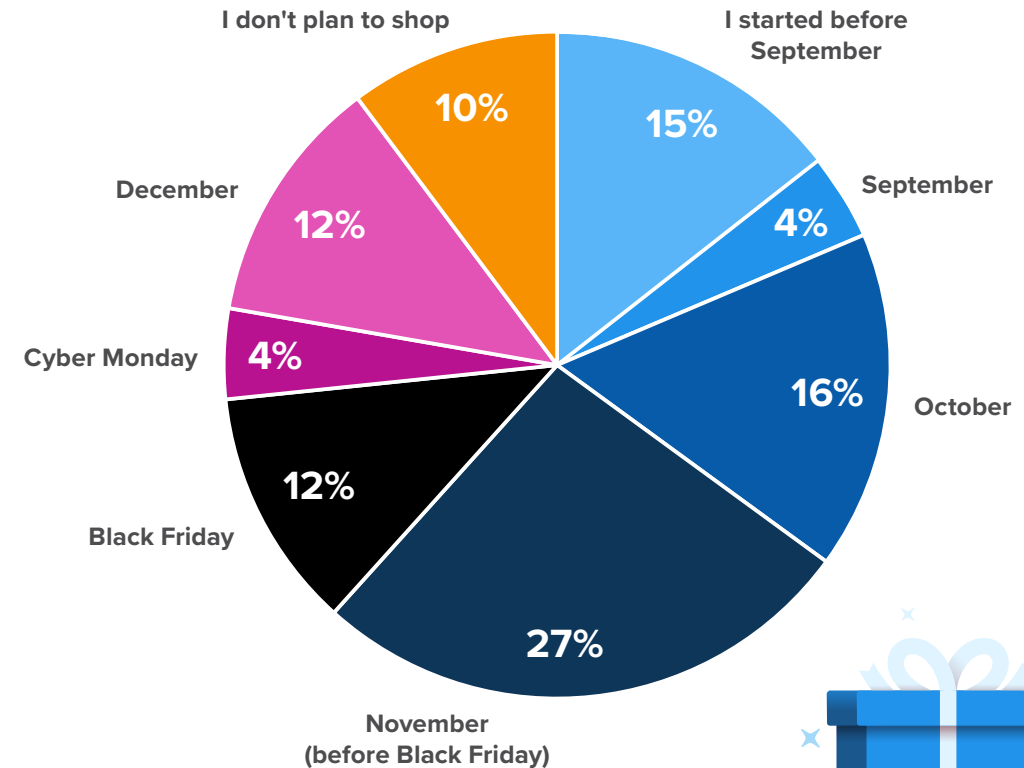
# Most consumers begin holiday shopping before Black Friday

We surveyed consumers about their holiday shopping plans, focusing on when they intend to start gift shopping and what types of gifts they're most likely to purchase.

Our findings show that 62% of respondents plan to begin their holiday shopping before Black Friday. Specifically, 15% started as early as before September, 4% in September, 16% in October, and 27% will begin in November, prior to Black Friday.

As for gift preferences, gift cards and clothing/apparel topped the list of popular choices, reflecting what many shoppers will be seeking this season.

## When do you plan to start your holiday gift shopping?



62% of consumers plan to start their holiday shopping before Black Friday, with gift cards and clothing/apparel being the most popular gift choices. Retailers should prepare early and focus on these top categories to meet customer demand.

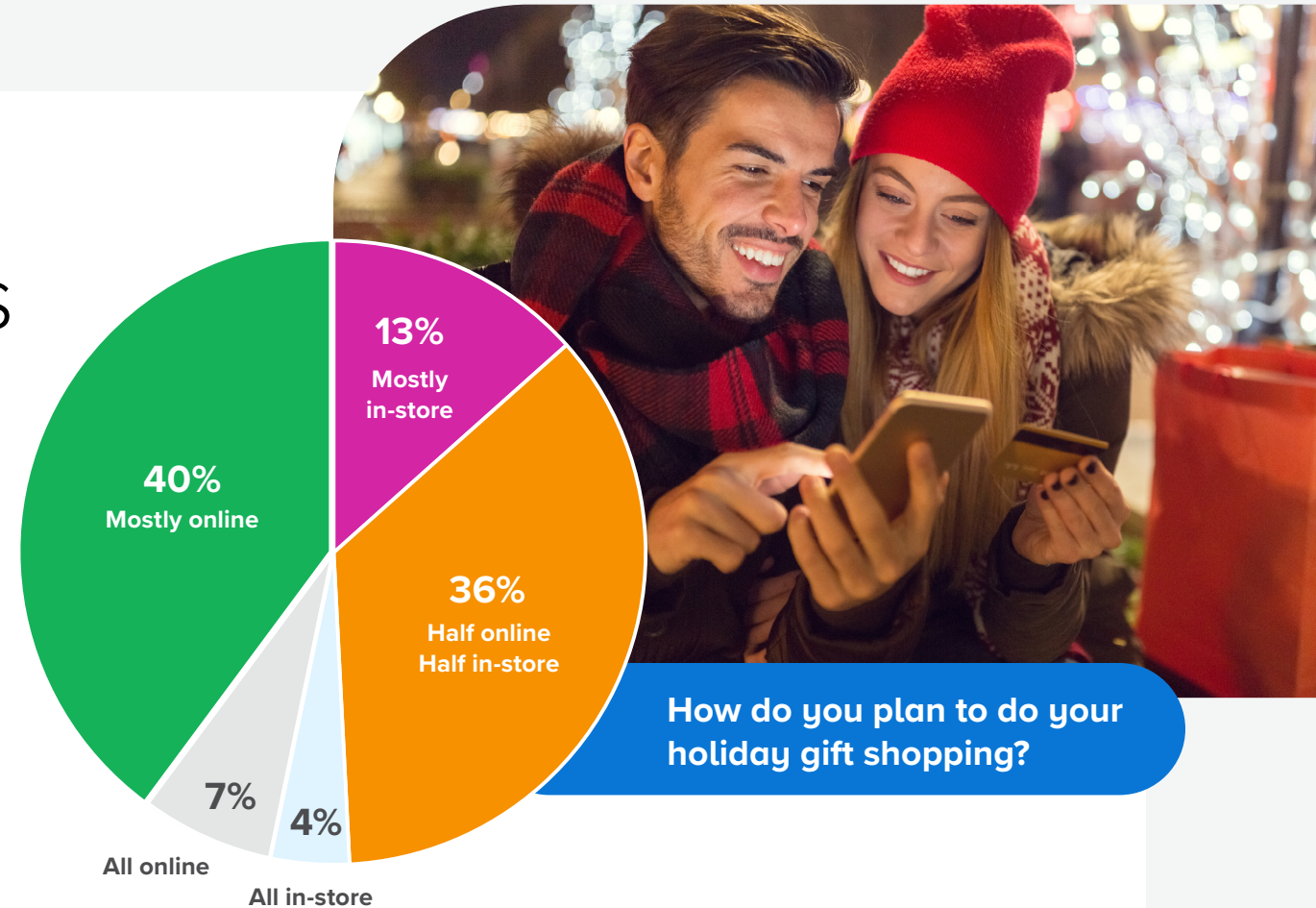


## TREND #2

# What's driving shoppers this season: online vs. in-store

A good deal is a priority for all shoppers, but the factors that influence their choices differ between online and in-store experiences. While low shipping costs attract online shoppers, in-store customers are more concerned with having an easy shopping experience and quick checkout.

When asked about their holiday shopping plans, 40% of respondents indicated they would shop primarily online, while 36% planned to shop using a combination of both methods. Younger shoppers tend to favor online shopping, whereas older consumers lean more toward in-store experiences.



The shopping preference skews toward online shopping, with consumers increasingly valuing different aspects of their shopping experience based on their chosen method. Examining and prioritizing strategies to meet these distinct preferences should be a top priority this season



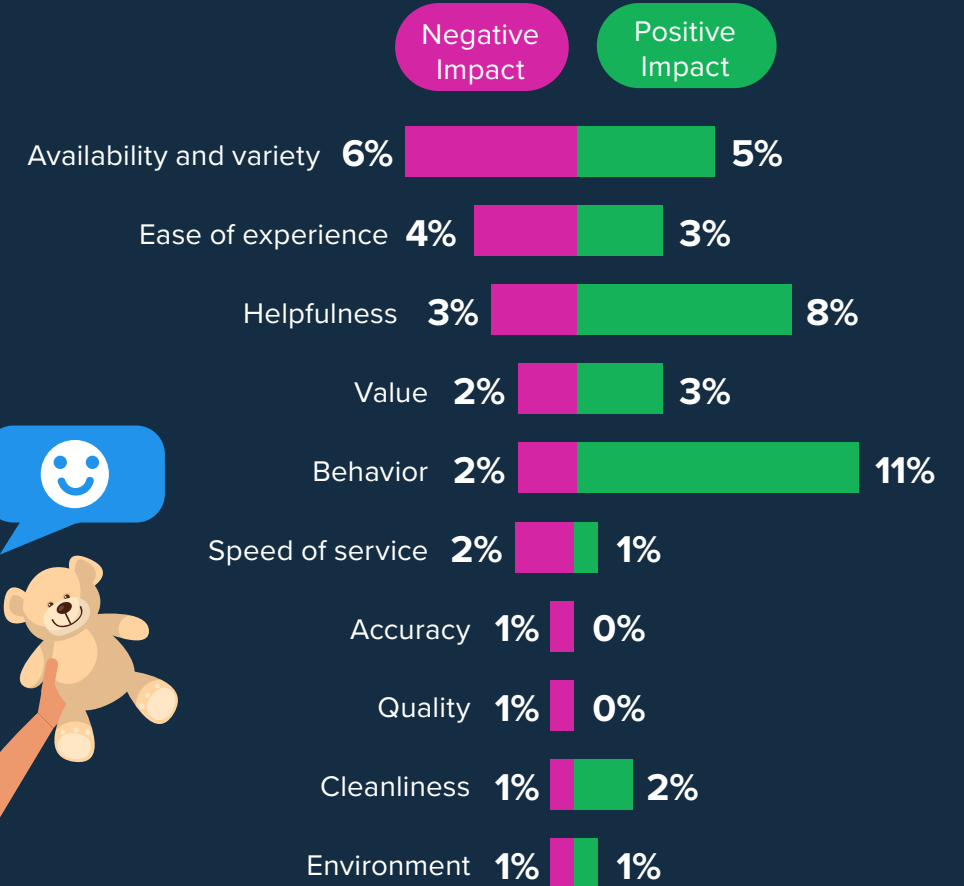
### TREND #3

## Your associate's behavior can influence the shopping experience

During the holiday season, product availability has the biggest negative impact on the customer experience, but associate behavior and helpfulness have an even greater positive impact. Positive associate interactions are the best way to drive satisfaction during the holiday.

Top retailers distinguish themselves by receiving more mentions of helpful, knowledgeable staff, and customers at these stores are less likely to focus on price. This suggests that excellent service can shift attention away from pricing concerns and foster brand loyalty. The analysis highlights how crucial associate interactions shape customer perceptions, underscoring the value of consistently high-quality service.

### Impact to retailers holiday overall satisfaction



For in-store shoppers, the associate behavior has the most influence on the experience. Top retailers stand out by having more mentions of helpful and knowledgeable staff with positive attitudes; it is critical to maintain this throughout the day.

# Using CX insights to plan ahead for a successful holiday season

The holiday shopping season remains a vital period for retailers, but customer expectations evolve each year. Without data-driven insights to guide your preparation, you risk missing out on emerging trends.

Invest in research now to ensure you're well-prepared and set up for a successful holiday season.

See why 500+ brands choose SMG



## About Service Management Group

SMG inspires experiences that improve people's lives. We are a catalyst for change—helping organizations generate new revenue, grow existing revenue, reduce churn and detractors, and drive operational efficiencies. Our unique software with a service (SwaS) model puts a dual focus on platform technology and professional services, making it easy for brands to activate insights based on customer and employee feedback. To learn more about our customer, employee, and brand experience management (XM) solutions, visit [www.smg.com](http://www.smg.com).

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