



# Holiday 2020 insights

Your pandemic guide to  
holiday sales success

Microsoft Advertising. Intelligent connections.

COVID-19 has changed consumer search behavior and shaken up the economy. We're navigating uncharted waters, making this year's holiday retail season seem uncertain.

Let Microsoft Advertising help you plan your campaign strategy and plot a course to holiday sales success.

[Schedule a free search consultation](#) with one of our search specialists. We'll help you craft a winning holiday ad campaign with one-on-one support that's customized to your client's business.

We're here to help you set your clients up for holiday season success.



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COVID-19 trends



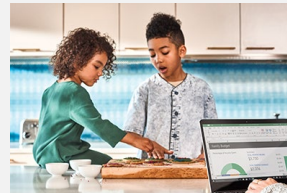
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Holiday 2019 trends



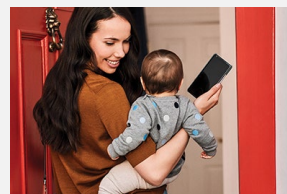
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2020 holiday guide

# COVID-19 trends

COVID-19 has driven consumers online and permanently shifted their behavior.





Consumers are relying on search now more than ever.

# The COVID-19 effect

COVID-19 has driven consumers online. A huge spike in search growth occurred as consumers across the U.S. turned to search as a lifeline in the face of COVID-19 restrictions.<sup>1</sup> The result? More people are working, shopping and learning from home. They also have more choices in the digital landscape than ever before.

This, coupled with other lifestyle shifts, has led to an 18% growth in searches

on tablets while desktop searches are up 8% when compared with pre-COVID-19 levels.<sup>2</sup> More people are also using search on the weekend, leading to a 12% increase in volume.<sup>1</sup> That's two times the rate of the weekday search volume growth.<sup>1</sup> Consumers are also searching during nonbusiness hours, specifically between 5 p.m. and 5 a.m.,<sup>3</sup> at a rate twice that of regular business hours.<sup>1</sup>

Desktop volume share and tablet volume share continue to grow, respectively, at 8% and 18% on average.<sup>1</sup>

Weekend volume grew by 12% — 2x that of weekday volume growth.<sup>1</sup>

Nonbusiness hours volume (5 p.m.–5 a.m.)<sup>3</sup> increased by 11%. That's 2x the rate of volume growth during regular business hours.<sup>1</sup>

## U.S. retail search volume and cost per click (CPC), indexed<sup>1</sup>



1. Microsoft internal data, the Microsoft Search Network, U.S., retail, December 29, 2019 – May 17, 2020. 2. Cramer-Flood, Ethan. "Global Commerce 2020," eMarketer, June 22, 2020. 3. Liu, Cindy. "We Expect 7.4 Million New Digital Buyers in 2020 as Pandemic Alters Behaviors," eMarketer, June 9, 2020.

# The shift to e-commerce is here to stay

COVID-19 brought e-commerce to the forefront. Consumers were forced to buy necessities and other retail items online due to store closures and safety concerns. Across the world, this shift pushed consumers online. Analysts predict a nearly 6% increase in digital buyers ages 45 and older in the U.S.,<sup>1</sup> with nearly 150 million new buyers worldwide buying online in 2020.<sup>2</sup>

And what is their search vehicle of choice? Desktops. Consumers turned to desktops at the start of the

pandemic and are continuing to rely on them for their search needs. In fact, nearly 70% of e-commerce sales in Q1 2020 were on desktops.<sup>2</sup>

Online shopping is expected to become a mainstay for consumers as they adapt to this new way of buying: 31% of U.S. consumers ages 16 to 64 say they will shop online more frequently after COVID-19.<sup>1</sup> Users have become reliant on desktops, a trend that's expected to continue too.<sup>1</sup>

**Tip:** Make sure your website is optimized for search, and that your advertising strategy has search at the forefront.

1. Liu, Cindy. "We Expect 7.4 Million New Digital Buyers in 2020 as Pandemic Alters Behaviors," eMarketer, June 9, 2020. 2. Lipsman, Andrew. "Frictionless Commerce 2020," eMarketer, May 21, 2020.



5.8% increase in U.S. digital buyers ages 45+ is expected in 2020.<sup>1</sup>



70% of online sales were captured on desktops in Q1 2020.<sup>2</sup>



31% of U.S. consumers ages 16-64 will shop online more frequently after the pandemic.<sup>1</sup>

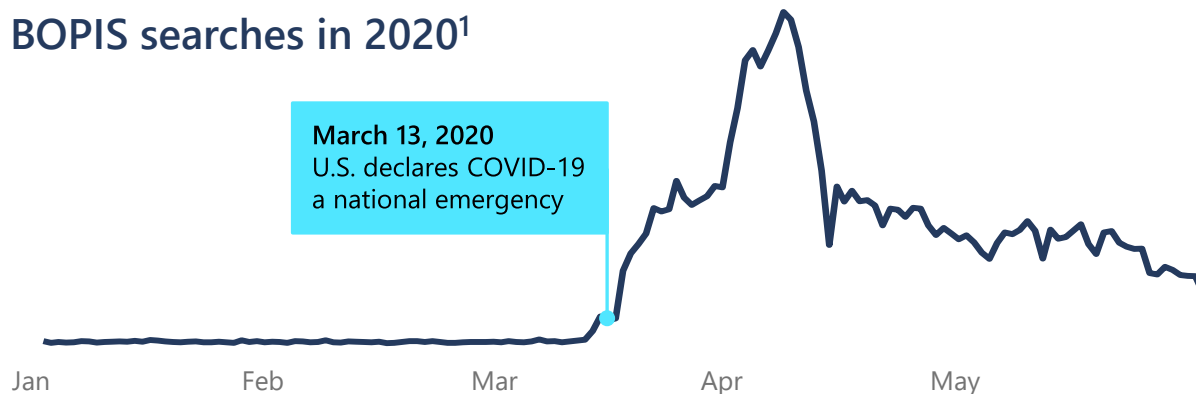
# 'Buy online, pick up in store' searches have skyrocketed

As stores closed or implemented safety measures, and concerns for personal safety increased, consumers searched for "buy online, pick up in store (BOPIS)," "curbside pickup," and "click-and-collect" at a much higher rate.<sup>1</sup> Stores implemented these options to allow for shopping and sales to continue.

Users are adapting to BOPIS and are using it when offered.<sup>2</sup> This new consumer habit provides safety over in-store shopping and lets users pick up products immediately instead of waiting for shipping.

Though the BOPIS search trend seems to be trending down, that's because shoppers now go directly to retailer sites offering it.<sup>1</sup>

## BOPIS searches in 2020<sup>1</sup>



1. Microsoft internal data, the Microsoft Search Network, U.S., retail, October 1, 2019 – May 31, 2020. 2. Kats, Rimma. "Click-and-collect sales will jump 60% as demand for frictionless commerce accelerates," eMarketer, May 21, 2020.



eMarketer predicts BOPIS revenue will increase by 60% in 2020.<sup>2</sup>

The BOPIS consumer trend is here to stay.

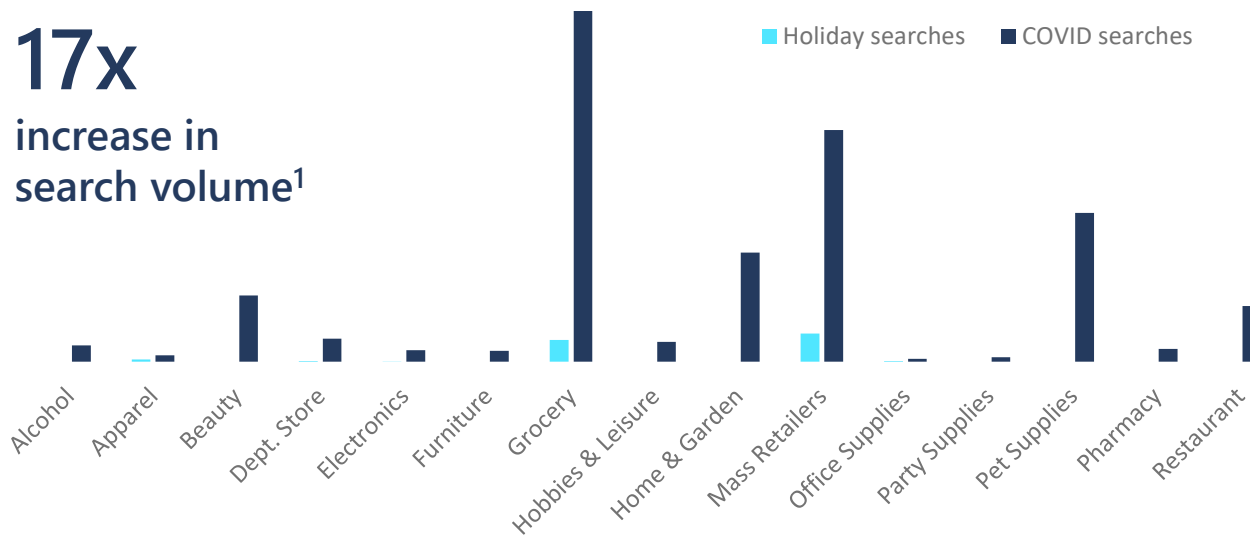


# BOPIS searches surged across retail categories

Categories that contained necessities saw the largest growth in BOPIS as a result of the pandemic, with grocery and mass retailers leading the way.<sup>1</sup>

Pet supplies, home and garden, and beauty also saw significant increases in BOPIS shopping.<sup>1</sup>

**17x**  
increase in search volume<sup>1</sup>



**Tip:** If you're a brick-and-mortar retailer, implement BOPIS as an option for consumers and highlight it in your campaigns.

1. Microsoft internal data, December 2019 and May 2020.



Previously popular categories grocery and mass retailers remain #1 and #2, with grocery in the top spot.<sup>1</sup>

New significant categories include pet supplies and beauty.<sup>1</sup>



# Category searches increased, highlighting new consumer needs and interests

As retail searches have increased YoY due to COVID-19 and the homebody economy, certain categories saw more significant growth than others. Food and grocery searches saw a 44% increase YoY, as consumers stay home, search for grocery and food delivery, and go to restaurants much less.<sup>1</sup>

With day care shifting to working parents, and remote working and online schooling becoming the new normal, consumers searched for computers and other electronics 36% more YoY.<sup>1</sup> This is most likely to accommodate new at-home needs, such as home offices and entertainment for children and

families. The shift to at-home entertainment and work led to the home and garden category seeing a nearly 30% increase in searches YoY.<sup>1</sup>

The beauty and personal care category saw a 23% increase in searches YoY<sup>1</sup> as consumers in the U.S. were forced to alter their beauty routines due to COVID-19 closing salons and spas.

With these category and consumer shifts, think about how your business or service can adapt to meet new consumer behaviors and how you can subsequently reach them authentically where they are, on search.

U.S. year-over-year (YoY) search trends from onset of COVID-19



+44% increase in food and grocery searches.



+36% increase in computer and consumer electronics searches.



+29% increase in home and garden searches.



+23% increase in beauty and personal care searches.

1. Microsoft internal data, U.S. data, weeks 11-24, 2019 versus weeks 11-24, 2020.



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# Holiday 2019 trends

Let's look back at last year to see what the 2020 holiday season may hold.



# Holiday season remained the king for retail

Consumers spent big for the holidays in 2019. The holiday season continues to be the largest retail shopping season of the year for both consumers and businesses.



**Holiday sales surpassed \$1 trillion for the first time ever, with 3.7% growth.<sup>1</sup>**

Not only were consumers spending big in 2019, they were also shopping online more than ever before. E-commerce retail sales grew overall, and home improvement and grocery/beverage categories saw the largest online sales growth YoY.<sup>1</sup>



**Online sales saw 13.2%<sup>1</sup> sales growth while desktop grew 8%.<sup>2</sup>**

The 2019 holiday season saw large online sales growth<sup>1</sup>

Home improvement

+25%

Grocery/beverage

+20%

Home/décor/furniture

+20%

Automotive

+19%

Health/fitness/nutrition

+18%

Consumer electronics/  
major appliances

+18%

Sporting goods/outdoors

+16%

**Tip:** Since the holiday season is huge for consumers and spending, be sure your search campaign is set up properly to reach them.

1. Lipsman, Andrew. "U.S. holiday 2019 and looking ahead to holiday 2020 planning," eMarketer, February 13, 2020. 2. "2019 holiday shopping trends," Adobe Analytics Insights, 2020.

# Desktop drove the bulk of the season's spending and purchases

Last year, 60% of all holiday online purchases were made on a desktop.<sup>1</sup> Desktop also drove over two times the conversion rate (CVR) of mobile at

4.3%.<sup>2</sup> This shows that mobile is more often used for research on the go, whereas shoppers rely on desktops to make their final purchase.



60% of all 2019 online holiday sales were on desktop.<sup>1</sup>



75% of all clicks on the Microsoft Search Network were on desktop or tablet.<sup>3</sup>

**Tip:** Desktop searching is here to stay, thanks to COVID-19, and it will likely comprise most e-commerce sales in the upcoming season.

1. Lipsman, Andrew. "U.S. holiday 2019 and looking ahead to holiday 2020 planning," eMarketer, February 13, 2020. 2. "Holiday season e-commerce in the United States Dossier," Statista, 2020. 3. Microsoft internal data, U.S. retail clicks, October 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019.



# Convenience was key for holiday shoppers

Consumers wanted easier holiday shopping in 2019. Free shipping enticed 92% of retail shoppers to buy from retailers offering such deals.<sup>1</sup> During Cyber Week, 86% of e-commerce sales had free shipping.<sup>2</sup> Consumers also wanted the BOPIS option, which appeals to shoppers looking for immediate gratification and a less hurried shopping experience. This spurred 60% of retailers to implement BOPIS,<sup>3</sup> leading to a 35% increase in BOPIS purchases YoY.<sup>2</sup>

92% of consumers planned to take advantage of free shipping deals.<sup>1</sup>

The convenience of staying home and saving on shipping is key.

60% of retailers implemented BOPIS in 2019 holiday season.<sup>3</sup>

Buy online, pick up in store allows for immediate gratification.

86% of Cyber Week online sales had free shipping.<sup>2</sup>

Free shipping entices consumers, especially during big retail days.

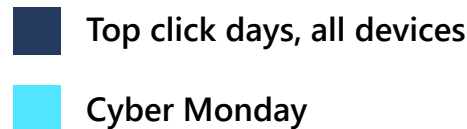
35% increase in BOPIS for 2019 holiday season<sup>2</sup>

BOPIS replaces the in-store shopping experience.

**Tip:** Be sure to include free and fast shipping promotions and BOPIS options for holiday shoppers.

# Top click days extend past Cyber Week

While the top click days for the holiday season happen primarily during Cyber Week, the weeks leading up to Christmas saw many high-click days.<sup>1</sup> Cyber Monday had the most clicks.<sup>1</sup>



November 2019

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

December 2019

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**Tip:** Though clicks are expected to peak at the end of November and early December, advertisers shouldn't exhaust their budgets during this period. Bid on less competitive days to take advantage of lower CPCs and ensure coverage over the multi-month shopping journey.

1. Microsoft internal data, the Microsoft Search Network, U.S., October 1-December 31, 2019.



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# Holiday 2020 forecast

Let's look ahead to see what this year's  
holiday season has in store.



# Insights to reimagine the 2020 holiday season

How will COVID-19 impact retail this holiday season? That's the question on everyone's mind. The pandemic has consumers spending time online, especially on desktops. They're also buying more online. Convenience remains a big selling point. BOPIS will be a key differentiator for shoppers this year and is expected to grow significantly based on both holiday 2019 and COVID-19 shopping trends.

Consumers are also demanding more from the brands they support in terms of shared values, trusted data collection and social activism. Highlight your values to differentiate your brand and build trust, love and loyalty.

Lastly, consumers will delay larger purchases due to economic uncertainties, including holding off on holiday travel because of restrictions and safety concerns.<sup>1</sup>

**Tip:** Your advertising dollars must work harder than ever, and search is the place to be.

The holiday consumer's journey starts with search.

As the pandemic continues, they're relying on it more than ever.



E-commerce and search will grow and be at the forefront for consumers this season.



Consumers will continue to largely use desktop as their purchasing platform.



BOPIS will remain a top shopping option this holiday season.



Differentiate your brand by highlighting your values.



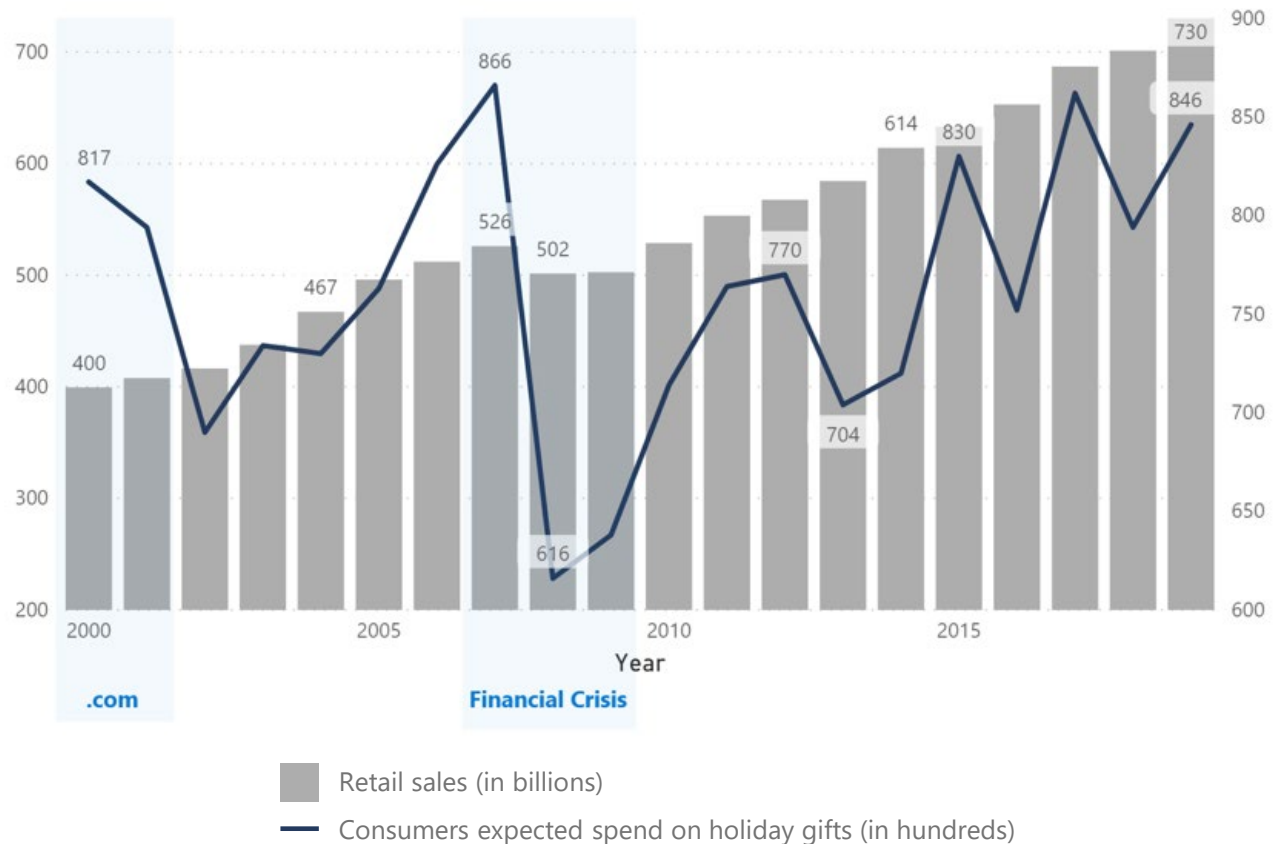
Consumers are delaying larger purchases due to the impact of COVID-19.<sup>2</sup>

# Holiday retail sales often stay strong even when consumers say they're cutting back

Holidays still happen and consumers will still shop and celebrate, usually more than they expect to, regardless of the economy. So, while retail spending may drop this holiday season, it likely won't drop as drastically as consumers expect.<sup>1</sup>



During the 2008 financial crisis, consumers reported they would spend 29% less during the holidays in 2008, though retail sales dipped by only 4.7% YoY.<sup>2</sup>



1. "Telephone interview of 1,015 people ages 18+," Gallup, November 1-14, 2019. 2. "Retail sales in the U.S. from 2000 to 2019 (in billions) months of November and December," National Retail Federation and the U.S. Census Bureau, October 2019.



# Consumer preference for online shopping will boost e-commerce sales dramatically

The shift to online shopping during the pandemic will help provide e-commerce growth well above what was predicted at the end of 2019.

While overall retail sales in the U.S. will decrease, online sales will increase significantly across categories.<sup>1</sup> Categories hit hard by COVID-19, such as apparel, are still expected to see e-commerce growth in 2020.<sup>1</sup>



**Tip:** This holiday season, advertisers should focus on e-commerce efforts and reimagine their business digitally.

1. Lipsman, Andrew and Cindy Liu. "U.S. e-commerce 2020," eMarketer, June 8, 2020.

# Consumers want contactless shopping

The demand for contactless shopping has been supercharged as consumers prioritize their safety over the in-store shopping experience. Yet it's the convenience of touch-free shopping that analysts believe will cause permanent shifts in consumer behavior. According to eMarketer, 52% of the U.S. population will use BOPIS options in 2020,<sup>1</sup> driving a 60% YoY growth in BOPIS sales.<sup>2</sup>

Consumers are also changing their holiday shipping expectations, with 81% expecting expedited shipping options.<sup>3</sup> It's expected that 44% of U.S. consumers will delay holiday shopping due to expedited shipping options and the expectation that purchases will arrive before the holidays.<sup>3</sup>

**Tip:** Implement BOPIS and fast and free shipping options to capture and keep consumer interest.

1. "Click-and-Collect Buyers U.S., 2020-2024." eMarketer, June 2020. 2. Kats, Rimma. "Click-and-Collect Sales will Jump 60% As Demand for Frictionless Commerce Accelerates," eMarketer, May 21, 2020. 3. "2020 retailer playbook," RetailMeNot, June 8, 2020.



52% of the U.S. population will use BOPIS in 2020.<sup>1</sup>



81% want retailers to offer expedited shipping for holiday shopping.<sup>3</sup>



44% of consumers will use fast shipping to shop later in the season.<sup>3</sup>

# Plan your campaign around holiday shopping trends

Shoppers will be online and searching even earlier this holiday season, with 19% of U.S. consumers starting their shopping in September or earlier.<sup>1</sup> Consumers have been postponing purchases due to COVID-19, and it's believed those delayed purchases will be made during the holiday season.<sup>2</sup>

Plan your holiday campaign around shopping trends to improve brand consideration and influence consumer decision-making whether they're researching products or ready to buy. Remember: Search is where consumers start their purchase journey. In fact, 57% of consumers turn to search when they don't have a brand in mind,<sup>3</sup> and

91% of searches on the Microsoft Search Network were non-branded in the 2019 holiday season.<sup>4</sup> Make sure your messaging aligns with key holiday shopping phases and customer journey touch points.

The weeks leading up to Cyber Week see Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales and promotions, with retailers often teasing products well before Thanksgiving week.<sup>5</sup> And with good reason: Cyber Week draws the most sales and consumer spend of the holiday season.<sup>2</sup>

1. "2019 Winter Holiday Trends," National Retail Federation, 2020). 2. Lipsman, Andrew. "U.S. holiday 2019 and looking ahead to holiday 2020 planning," eMarketer, February 13, 2020. 3. "What Digital Channels Do U.S. Internet Users Use to Begin Their Search for Products Without a Specific Product in Mind?" eMarketer, October 2019. 4. Microsoft internal data, the Microsoft Search Network, U.S., October 1-December 31, 2019. 5. Kelly, Gordon. "When is Black Friday 2019?" Forbes, October 24, 2019.



## October

Consumers begin shopping for holidays

- 19% of consumers start shopping in September or earlier.<sup>1</sup>
- 39% of consumers start their holiday shopping before November.<sup>1</sup>

## November

### PRE-CYBER WEEK

Retailers release promotions and pre-Black Friday sales

- Offers enter the market in early November to tease Black Friday.<sup>3</sup>
- Sales begin before Black Friday to entice shoppers.<sup>3</sup>

### CYBER WEEK

Majority of holiday revenue driven during these key dates

- Cyber Monday, Black Friday and Thanksgiving were top 3 e-commerce sales days of the holiday season.<sup>2</sup>



While being online during Black Friday and Cyber Monday is important, other days within Cyber Week are seeing large YoY growth and lower CPCs.<sup>1</sup> Ensure you're in market well before Cyber Monday to capitalize on early shoppers and those doing research beforehand.<sup>2</sup>

But don't forget about last-minute shoppers who start and finish their shopping in the weeks leading up to Christmas and beyond. They'll be looking for offers that provide convenience like click and carry, BOPIS

and same-day delivery. In 2019, BOPIS revenue for the holiday season increased 55% over the seasonal average in the week before Christmas.<sup>3</sup> Why? Shoppers needed their purchases to arrive before the holidays.

After December 25, 68% of consumers plan to keep shopping for gifts and product exchanges.<sup>4</sup> Another 51% plan on taking advantage of sales and promotions to shop for themselves.<sup>5</sup> That's why your campaign should run before Cyber Week and extend throughout the entire holiday season.<sup>6</sup>

1. Microsoft internal data for queries containing "Black Friday" and "Cyber Monday," Microsoft Search Network, U.S., November 1-December 31, 2019. 2. Lipsman, Andrew. "U.S. holiday 2019 and looking ahead to holiday 2020 planning," eMarketer, February 13, 2020. 3. "Adobe Digital Insights Holiday Recap 2019," Adobe, January 11, 2020. 4. Kelly, Gordon. "When is Black Friday 2019?" Forbes, October 24, 2019. 5. "3 ways consumers are continuing to shop after the holidays," National Retail Federation, December 26, 2018. 6. Microsoft internal data, the Microsoft Search Network, U.S., October 1-December 31, 2019.



## December POST-CYBER WEEK THROUGH CHRISTMAS

Consumers continue to shop for holidays and use BOPIS

- 32% of shoppers plan to begin shopping in December.<sup>2</sup>
- BOPIS revenue increased 55% over the seasonal average in the 7 days before Christmas.<sup>6</sup>

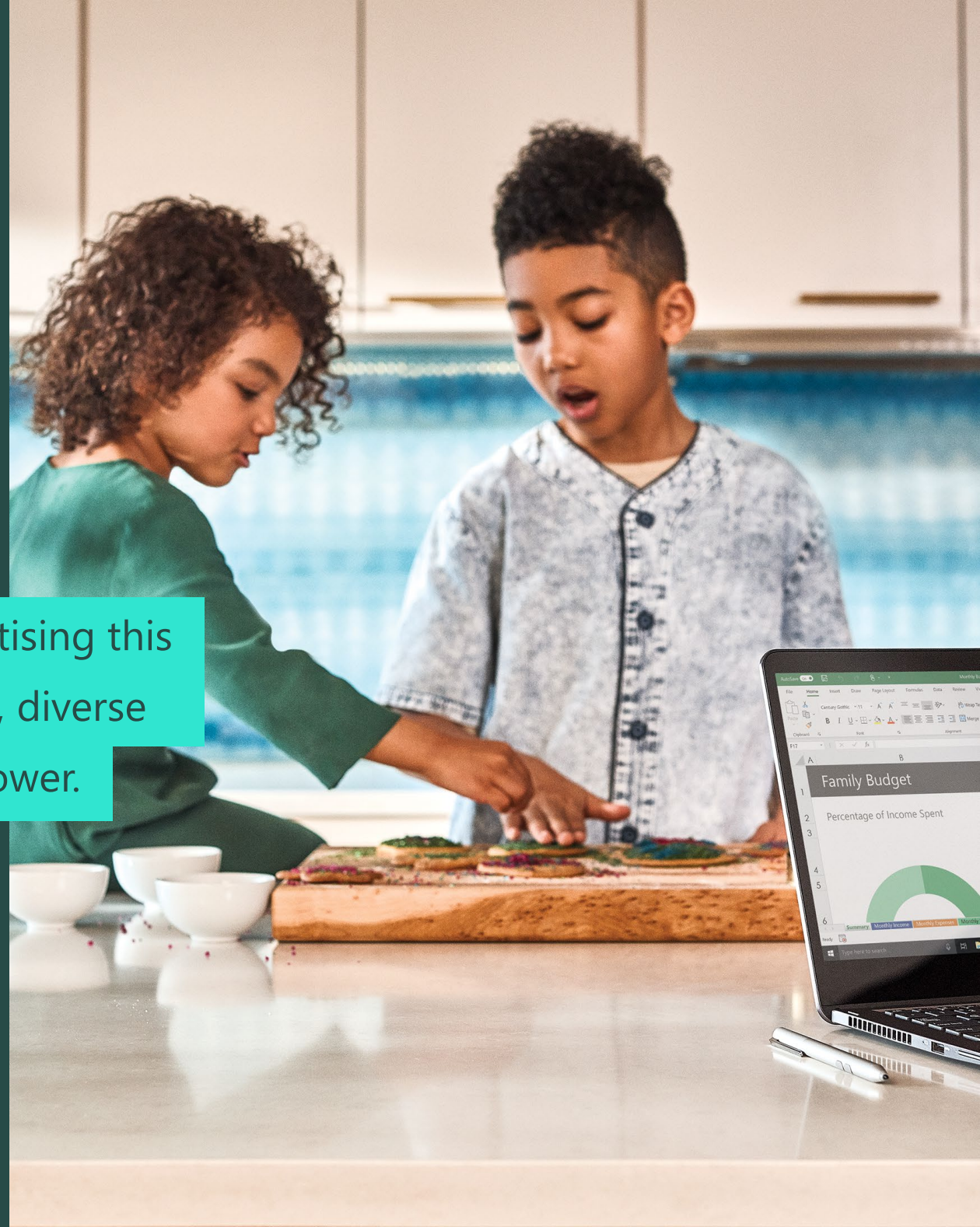
## AFTER CHRISTMAS

Retailers continue sales, and shoppers seek deals and use gift cards

- 68% of shoppers plan to continue buying after December 25.<sup>4</sup>
- 51% of shoppers say sales and promotions entice them to shop.<sup>4</sup>

# Microsoft Advertising Audience insights

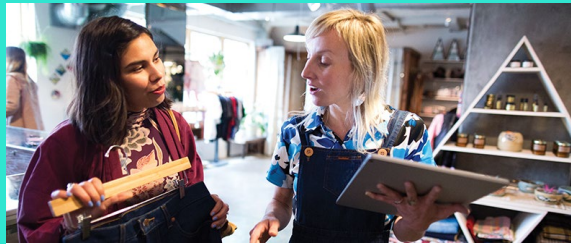
Advertise with Microsoft Advertising this holiday season to reach a large, diverse audience with vast spending power.



# Reach a large and unique audience on the Microsoft Search Network



74.3M total retail PC searchers.<sup>1</sup>



797M total retail PC Searches.<sup>1</sup>



39% of all retail PC paid clicks.<sup>1</sup>



42M PC retail searchers not reached on Google.<sup>1</sup>

That spends more than average consumers



Unique searchers on the Microsoft Search Network spend 25% more online than the average internet searcher.<sup>2</sup>



Microsoft Search Network users are 97% more likely to be in the top 10% of income<sup>2</sup> than the average internet searcher.<sup>3</sup>

1. comScore qSearch, Explicit Core Search (custom), U.S., December 2019; industry categories based on comScore classifications. Data represents desktop traffic only. 2. comScore qSearch, Explicit Core Search, U.S., March 2020. The Microsoft Search Network includes Microsoft sites, Yahoo! sites (searches powered by Bing) and AOL sites in the United States. Data represents desktop traffic only. 3. Global Web Index, Chart Builder, U.S., 2019; Microsoft Search Network represents unduplicated visitors to Bing web search, Yahoo! web search and AOL.com web search. Data represents desktop, mobile web, and tablet traffic.

# And reaches a diverse audience

Reach diverse audiences by personalizing your campaigns with purpose. Build trust to drive business value. Being on the Microsoft Search Network means you're:



**24% more likely\*** to reach Gen Z audiences who are loyal to brands.<sup>1</sup>

**20% more likely\*** to reach LGBTQ+ audiences who love the brand and value brand advocacy.<sup>1</sup>

**48% more likely\*** to reach Hispanic audiences who buy brands they see advertised.<sup>1</sup>

**72% more likely\*** to reach Black/African American audiences who like to try new products.<sup>1</sup>

**Nearly 3x more likely\*** to reach veterans who buy brands they see advertised.<sup>1</sup>

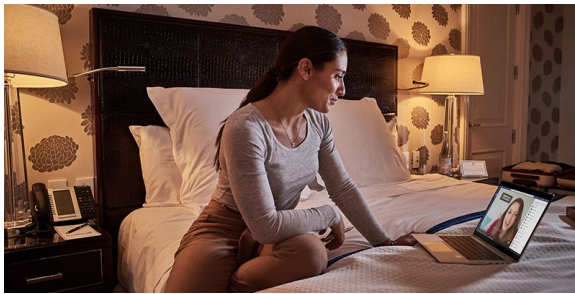
**59% more likely\*** to reach Indigenous Peoples who value having insider information about the brand or product.<sup>1</sup>

\*More likely than average internet user.

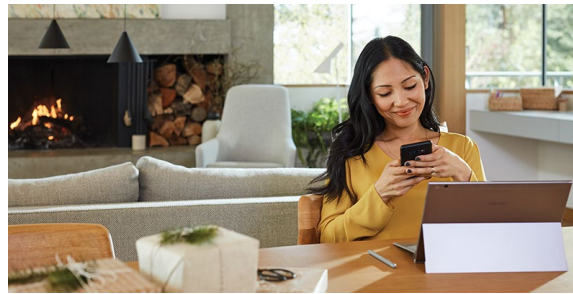
1. Global Web Index, Chart Builder, U.S., 2019. Microsoft Search Network represents unduplicated visitors to Bing web search, Yahoo! web search and AOL.com web search. Data represents desktop, mobile web and tablet traffic.



# Trust plays a critical role in consumer decision-making



85% of people say they'll only consider a brand they trust.<sup>1</sup>



4.5x greater concern coming from marketing leaders over consumer backlash.<sup>1</sup>



64% of people are more trusting of brands that represent diversity in ads.<sup>1</sup>



49% of people have stopped purchasing from a brand that didn't represent their values.<sup>1</sup>

## Trust has the power to make or break brands

Consumers want brands they can trust. This means being transparent, using your platform to speak out on important issues, and acting in line with your customers' values.

Brands that make a value-based, emotional connection with consumers stand to build customer trust and loyalty. Reaching them via search in an authentic way that highlights your values is key to capturing and maintaining their attention.



[Take a deep dive into Marketing with Purpose.](#)

1. Microsoft Advertising and LRW Research: "Uncovering the Trust Drivers," 2019 (U.S.). Microsoft Advertising Data Driven Marketers Blueprint for Success, 2019 U.S. and UK.



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Microsoft Advertising  
**2020 holiday guide**

Let Microsoft Advertising help you plan your best holiday campaign with the 2020 holiday guide.



# New year, same key dates to build your marketing calendar around

We predict that this holiday season will see similar top click days and that well into December people will still be shopping online for holiday gifts.<sup>1</sup> Don't exhaust your budget on Cyber Week. Be sure to extend it through early January to capture the most shoppers.

- Black Friday
- Expected peak search days
- Cyber Monday
- Expected secondary top search days

November 2020

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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		1	2	3	4	5
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		



The post-Thanksgiving dates of Black Friday and Cyber Monday are expected again to deliver.

Extend your holiday campaign past Cyber Week to capitalize on high-click days at lower CPCs.



1. Microsoft internal data, November-December 2019.

# Microsoft Advertising

## Pre-Cyber Week checklist

October 1 – November 23

**39% of consumers start their holiday shopping before November.**<sup>1</sup>

**42M PC retail searchers on the Microsoft Search Network aren't reached on Google.**<sup>2</sup>

### Start building an audience of your best customers

- Ensure [conversion tracking](#) is set up to build remarketing pools and measure your impact online and offline.
- Build awareness before Cyber Week sales start by extending reach beyond search with [Microsoft Audience Ads](#).
- Set up [automated rules and bids](#) early in the season to allow the algorithm to build in advance of Cyber Week.
- Reach mobile audiences through [Microsoft Advertising search partners](#) and get performance insights with website reports.

### Learn how headlines and descriptions perform for your business objectives

- Use [Responsive Search Ads](#) to take advantage of additional headline and character limits and let Microsoft Advertising identify and report to you the best performing ad combinations.

### Influence decision-making among those who are choosing brands

- Increase your search term coverage using customized ad experiences with [Dynamic Search Ads](#), and uncover new business opportunities without draining your budget and team resources with [broad match](#).
- Use broad keyword targeting (e.g., category keywords, brand keywords) with [In-market Audiences](#) or [Remarketing](#) layered in to reach relevant audiences who may be searching in a variety of ways.
- Help your ads be more visible with mainline bidding. Check out the [Recommendations tab](#) for bid adjustment recommendations.

### Tease upcoming sales and events

- Enhance your text ads with eye-catching [ad customizers](#) to give potential customers greater incentive to click your ads.

1. "2019 Winter Holiday Trends," National Retail Federation, 2020. 2. comScore qSearch, Explicit Core Search (custom), U.S., Dec 2019; industry categories based on comScore classifications. Data represents desktop traffic only.

# Microsoft Advertising

## Cyber Week checklist

November 24 – November 30

**86% of Cyber Week online sales had free shipping.**<sup>1</sup>

**39% of all retail PC paid clicks happen on the Microsoft Search Network.**<sup>2</sup>

### Work smarter to be more efficient

- Have more control and flexibility when enabling campaigns, adjust budgets, and send email alerts with [automated rules and bids](#) or scripts. Create an automatic rule to optimize your campaigns, ad groups, ads and keywords.
- Focus on downstream conversions when CPCs are most competitive with [Target CPA](#), [Enhanced CPC](#) and [Maximize Conversions](#). Let Microsoft Advertising adjust your keyword bids in real time to reach the cost per acquisition (CPA) you want.
- Hone efforts to expand coverage on highly profitable products or priority categories, and bid differently based on custom labels you create, with [page feed Dynamic Search Ads](#).
- Sharpen audience targeting using your own rich, first-party customer data with [Custom Audiences](#), which can be built based on segments like purchase history, lifetime value and time since last purchase.
- Reduce the risk of campaigns pausing during peak shopping by automatically redistributing unused budget to top performers with [Shared Budgets](#).

- Save time and target customers ready to buy across the Microsoft Audience Network with [In-market Audiences](#).

### Compete by leading with offer-focused messaging

- Display special offers on specific products or sitewide sales with [Merchant Promotions](#), via Product Ads with Shopping Campaigns. Share top products and holiday deals with the exclusive [Flyers experiences](#).
- Highlight competitive offers, top features of your business, and value propositions with [Callout Extensions](#). Expanding your ads could increase your click-through rate.
- Improve ad effectiveness with [ad customizers and Target Audience ID](#) to provide better deals to audiences built pre-Cyber Week, and those already looking for your products or service.
- Reconnect with visitors that leave your website with [Remarketing](#). Provide a compelling offer to drive conversions.

1. Lipsman, Andrew. "U.S. holiday 2019 and looking ahead to holiday 2020 planning," eMarketer, February 13, 2020.

2. comScore qSearch, Explicit Core Search (custom), U.S., Dec 2019; industry categories based on comScore classifications. Data represents desktop traffic only.

# Microsoft Advertising

## Post-Cyber Week checklist

December 1 – January 3

32% of shoppers plan to begin shopping in December.<sup>1</sup>

55% increase in BOPIS revenue over seasonal average in the 7 days before Christmas.<sup>2</sup>

74M retail PC searchers on the Microsoft Search Network.<sup>3</sup>

### Convert last-minute shoppers by making in-store and digital shopping complementary

- Reach those who prefer to buy online and pick up in-store by promoting products available in nearby stores with [Local Inventory Ads](#) (LIA); provide the exact store location with [Location Extensions](#); share in-store pickup availability with the BOPIS badge displayed with LIA.

### Be direct

- Drive customers to click through clear calls to action with [Action Extensions](#). Encourage engagement through direct messages, such as “Download” or “Reserve.”
- Use [countdown customizers](#) to ensure your customers know when shipping promotions end.
- Highlight top features of your business, such as free shipping dates, with [Callout Extensions](#) and Promotion Extensions.

### Optimize based on learnings gleaned from (pre-)Cyber Week performance

- Reduce setup time and improve ad quality with [ad customizers](#). Let Microsoft Advertising do the heavy lifting. Provide just one ad copy, and hundreds of customized ad variations will be created to test across audiences.
- Redistribute unused budget to top campaigns, increase your chances of getting more clicks, and ensure high-performing campaigns don't pause with [Shared Budgets](#).
- Boost clicks and conversions outside search with [Microsoft Audience Ads](#), and remarket to those who viewed or added specific products to their carts with [Product Audiences](#).
- Target your best customers on any device with [device targeting](#) and advertise where your best customers are with [location targeting](#).

1. Lipsman, Andrew. “U.S. holiday 2019 and looking ahead to holiday 2020 planning,” eMarketer, February 13, 2020. 2. “Adobe Digital Insights Holiday Recap 2019,” Adobe, January 11, 2020. 3. comScore qSearch, Explicit Core Search (custom), U.S., December 2019; industry categories based on comScore classifications. Data represents desktop traffic only.

# Holiday retail best practices

## Be there ahead of time

- ✓ Review last season's campaigns for successes and lessons learned.
- ✓ Set budgets to accommodate increases in traffic.
- ✓ Upload campaigns early.
- ✓ Double-check to make sure all relevant accounts and campaigns are active.
- ✓ Follow up on any rejected ads.
- ✓ Add new, relevant and emerging keywords.
- ✓ Test new features and pilots to optimize before traffic volumes increase with peak season.

## Find approaches for a better ROI

- ✓ Test In-market Audiences directly and indirectly related to your industry.
- ✓ Budget for PC/tablet and mobile traffic.
- ✓ Plan your budgets for periods of high CPC.
- ✓ Opt in to search partner sites to expand your mobile reach.
- ✓ Use long-tail brand terms.

## Optimize keywords, ads and bids

- ✓ Set up the relevant ad extensions to drive more traffic.
- ✓ Test new ad copy variations.
- ✓ Set bids in anticipation of increased competition during the seasonal peaks.
- ✓ Apply auto-bidding strategies to take advantage of key audiences.
- ✓ Set up automated rules to schedule and automate your top campaign management tasks on a weekly, or

even daily, basis for invaluable time savings and efficiency gains.

- ✓ Optimize your keywords and ads by testing Dynamic Search Ads and Responsive Search Ads.

## Optimize Shopping Campaigns

- ✓ Schedule Merchant Promotions and Flyer Extensions to display relevant sitewide or category-specific offers and top products.
- ✓ Refresh your product feed daily.
- ✓ Send your full product feed with all product offers. Search query trends can change quickly, so ensure your products are eligible to serve as traffic fluctuates.
- ✓ Go beyond the required attributes and populate your feed with as many recommended attributes as possible, including GTIN, MPN, brand, size, color, shipping cost, and multiple images (up to 10 additional).
- ✓ Use Local Inventory Ads to promote in-store products and include the Curbside Pickup badge, if applicable.



## Ready to learn more?

Make search advertising a key part of your company's retail holiday marketing plan.

[Sign up with Microsoft Advertising today.](#)





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