

EBOOK

10 Foolproof strategies to Sell more during the 2021 sales

How to get more customers
without getting in over your
head with discounts

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Sales Layer: A commitment to the future of ecommerce

Your goal is to design and expand an online strategy through different channels and marketplaces that reach distributors, sellers, and digital consumers on multiple markets in 2021. Our mission is to provide you with agile tools and add more and more services that automate and enrich your daily work and your catalog. This ebook provides strategies for any sales period, always with digitalization and improving the shopping experience in mind.

If you would like to discover other materials related to the management and quality of product and catalog content, visit Sales Layer's [resources center](#), or request a [personalized session](#) with our team.

Have something to tell us? Write us at info@saleslayer.com

2020 has undoubtedly brought changes to commerce with it, and there have been two big ones: **an acceleration of digital and omnichannel strategies, and aggressive discounts and sales to give incentives for people to consume, as consumption has been low compared to previous years.**

Now that 2021 is beginning with new (and more positive) outlooks for society and the markets, should sellers go back to the same old practices? Will this year be good for discounts and sales like always?

Undoubtedly, the answer is yes: today's consumer is becoming more and more omnichannel – and that is even more true as a result of the current world pandemic. This means that **your customers are more varied and on more channels at the same time.** Getting to more and more places means you need a strategy that has been prepared beforehand and which combines online and offline channels and merges the traditional enticements (discounted products, exclusive offers) with new resources that are more attractive to the digital shopper.

Sales and discount periods will be just as busy in 2021 as always, or maybe even more: there are brands that have had some bad months and need to get rid of stock and gain back customers, and there are consumers who want to get back to their normal pace of life as soon as the current situation goes back to normal.

Although it was critical to be on top of things to face sales and discount periods in commerce and ecommerce in the past, in 2021 it will be even more fundamental – especially in the digital realm.

As long as there is still uncertainty on the opening of physical stores and under what conditions, with different situations in each country, an online presence will be key.

That's why 2021 will be the year of the omnichannel strategy and the year of trying to attract a public that seeks something more than just discounts. Doesn't sound easy? Well, it's not as hard as it seems and, what's more, it will be easier on your pocketbook than using those big signs that say "everything 70% off."

Make your marketing strategy this year based on lowering prices a little and on increasing your creativity and productivity a lot.



01

**Keys to surviving
(and selling a ton)
during any sales or
discount period**

MESSAGE

Even during impulsive times of the year like times when there are sales, the message is still more important than the wrapper. Your marketing team doesn't need to rack their brain trying to come up with the moment's most viral campaign. Recycling old ideas (even imitation what works for the competition) is enough to successfully sail through sales and discount periods.

And the secret is in the message that your brand or business transmits during these special days – days when **the main players should still be your products and the added value that your brand offers**, and not the event in and of itself.

And in terms of your sales goal, it is fundamental for the discount and sales strategy to be clear on its aims. More sales than last year? Reach a new demographic segment? Get rid of inventory for products that aren't selling well? Promote a product in your catalog? Increase brand popularity?

Not only will the percentages of your discounts depend on all this, but also the way that you will promote those discounts over your different channels.

PREPARATION

Those customers who waited until the day the sale started to make a line in front of the mall and frantically run through the surprise offers are a thing of the past.

Anticipation is something commonplace among consumers nowadays who prepare their wishlists and compare possible discounts and prices much before the sale actually starts officially. This means that both brands and retailers have to start with their preparations much earlier in order to provide a **proper response to the competition's actions and price changes while causing expectation to mount among the public**.

Undertaking analysis of the previous year and of trends is fundamental to be able to predict buying behaviors and the behavior of competitors, improve product content on digital channels, and be able to select your discounted items wisely.

In addition, **omnichannel sales complicate inventory management**. To have control of your stock over all the channels, forecast quantities for each product, and avoid supply and distribution problems with providers and warehouses are all paramount so that your customers don't run into snags and to make things easier on your customer care team.

AGILITY

When you start to plan your seasonal campaign or your sales campaign, surely there is someone who is already a step ahead of you.

Your team must work against the clock: speed is the most important thing to generate interest in your products and promotions and attract potential customers as soon as possible.

The most common recommendation is to start with promotions a week ahead of time, or even three weeks if you're planning a larger event in terms of sales or for your brand.

Having said that, this does not mean that you have to shoot off the fireworks too soon. **To create mystery, expectation, and positive tension** is ideal for starting your strategy off little by little and with plenty of time to spare – instead of waiting for the most important and noisy day of the sales/discount season.

ANALYSIS

Many times, sales/discount strategies work automatically and are full of prejudices. But, have you ever stopped to think about what your customers really look for and buy at these times of the year?

What were the most sold products? And what products were most reserved before the discounts kicked in? Which ones got more positive reviews? Which ones did you have supply problems with or problems with shipping quality?

You can learn from all those little details to be able to improve the shopping experience in the 2021 discount/sales period – and you can improve your selection of the products that you'd like to promote and discount in your catalog.

The background is a dark, textured image. It features a chessboard with a network diagram overlay, consisting of white lines connecting various nodes. A black chess piece, specifically a pawn, is visible on the right side of the board.

02

10 Never-Fail Strategies to Sell More during the 2021 Sales

01

A DIGITAL PRESENCE: Don't get left behind

One thing that 2020 has proven is that the digital is not a think of the future for commerce; that is to say, digital is here now, in the present, and you have to get digitized now. **The advance of ecommerce for manufacturers and retailers has been much faster** because of the pandemic and the increased number of consumers with no other alternatives than to make purchases online.

Now that entire customer base has discovered how convenient and easy online shopping is. And they'll want to keep up with that trend, but in an improved way.

That is your goal: firstly, **to digitize your business** if you have not already done so and, secondly, **to perfect your customers' omnichannel experience** so that they are more satisfied with your products and the shopping experience you provide them with.

According to Gartner, investment in digital channels increased by up to 80% in terms of multichannel strategies in 2020, as well as expense on online advertising (22%), social marketing (11.3%), and websites (10.4%). It's logical: buyers no longer go to physical shops to look through reduced price tags.

From now on, your sales and promotions have to go to the customer and get into his/her head, no matter where he/she is located.

Your own online shop? Amazon? Instagram Shop? Facebook Shops? Retargeting ads? Google ads?

Yeah, it seems as complicated as organizing a Christmas dinner during which everyone has to get along.... That's why over the following points, we are going to propose the best way to organize your digital presence effectively and quickly.



02 Omnichannel buying options: MAKE IT EASY

As a result of digitalization, brands and retailers have to increase their presence everywhere. The typical sign hung up in a shop window saying “50% OFF EVERYTHING!!” can be multiplied by dozens of channels and possibilities to get to your customers via the internet.

An omnichannel strategy is the best investment that any business that sells products can make, both in terms of improving catalog positioning and to offer the consumer the experience he/she is after. In short, it will increase your sales.

Faced with this new situation, your business has to be prepared to offer digital advantages via offline channels (like contactless payment methods, which are now offered by more than 60% of businesses), as well as online and offline combinations (buy it online and pick it up in the shop, known as click-and-collect).

And sales and discount campaigns increase the need to **bring the traditional shopping experience closer to virtual channels**. Sale and discount periods are the perfect time to try new strategies like virtual fitting rooms, live streaming events, virtual 360° tours of stores, personalized remote customer service, and any other alternative that brings you closer to your customers from their homes.

This will help you to bring your sales and discounts closer to the omnichannel customer in 2021!



Physical shops

Visits to physical shops are still the favorite of many consumers. To optimize this process, it is key to **integrate the stock in physical and digital channels well**, so that the real number you have on hand is always up to date for each store and to avoid situations like, “online it said that you had these shoes in my size.” You’ll also have to develop specific ads and promotions that attract customers to shops, if you have shops.



From offline to online

Both consumers who don’t trust visiting shops and those who are used to online shopping would prefer to have their online buying options available and up to date.



Click-and-collect

To avoid delays in shipping, many buyers choose the option of picking up their orders in the physical shop or at an agreed-upon pickup point. According to Signifyd, this type of shopping has doubled around the world in 2020, and it will continue to be a favorite during sales and discount periods to avoid paying for shipping fees and delays in order delivery.

03 The shopping experience: MAKE IT UN FORGETTABLE

Now that you have your business present on all the digital channels, do you think you've hooked your customer?

Your traffic can come to a halt and your customers can leave you after filling up their shopping carts.

Why do they go to the competition? What are your products and shopping experience lacking? Lower prices?

Truth be told, lowering prices aggressively only brings about momentary attraction from shoppers who will surely not go back to your brand or shop because they were only after the best deal in the first place. Instead of killing your income with unreasonable discounts, think about winning over loyal customers.

That's why **your product and shopping experience must be up to snuff in the digital world**. And in 2020, it has already been seen that product information is the main reason for growth or standstills in businesses.

Incorrect product data can bring about a crisis between an angry shopper and a customer service staff member. It will end up causing a negative review, harmful hashtags, and more followers who will heed the advice to avoid your brand or shop. More returns, more unhappy customers, less conversions.

Improving your product content management can have a direct impact on shoppers' experience and, therefore, on your sales performance.

Catalogs, websites, and product pages with more accurate, complete, and up-to-date data in real time are all key to bringing about customer satisfaction. And that is even more true in sales and discount periods, when people are shopping quickly without taking note of the details and your team barely has time to update all the data and prices over so few days or even every hour.

Is there a way to digitize any business's catalog and enrich their product content? Of course there is: **PIM (Product Information Management) has become the star tool of 2020 and the most promising solution for 2021.**

The growth of the PIM technology market has been huge since the great push for the digitalization of manufacturers and retailers; after all, this technology takes care, in just one platform, of all the processes associated with bringing together, managing, and distributing product information.

That's why a PIM solution has a dual impact: for your customers and for your team, as your team can work more effectively in a collaborative way by combining efforts and needs in terms of sales, marketing, and customer success.

During sales and discount periods, more people of your team will invest a lot of their time to update data, synchronize stock figures, and answer questions in chats and emails: with a PIM solution, having the answers on hand is faster and more efficient.

04 AUDIOVISUAL RESOURCES: Razzle-dazzle your customers

So many hours at home have made video and live streaming the main means of communication for 2020.

2021 will continue to be a year of audiovisual content – something that is increasingly necessary to **replicate the shopping experience of physical stores on digital channels.**



Video is key in advertisements, videos with an interactive purchase option (shoppable videos), 360° presentations, virtual and augmented reality experiences, livestream presentations with influencers or specialists, collaborative efforts with partners, and informational blurbs on social networks.

In short, a good video can bring about a better connection with your potential customers than a cold, impersonal message printed on a label.

05 SEASONAL EMAIL CAMPAIGNS: Don't write more, write better

With the arrival of digitalization, consumers got a breath of fresh air when they saw their mailboxes free of stacks of colorful brochures and flyers... but then they started to get spam and endless promotions on their cell phone and in their email.

Sales and discount periods are the perfect time to reconnect with your customers – especially those who are in your database but have been inactive for a time. Nevertheless, this does not mean you should drown them in messages with capital letters and flashing banners. As we were saying at the beginning of this guide, the important thing is how prepared you are – not the amount of your messages.

You can create an email list linked to a specific season or sale/discount period. Perhaps some discount periods are good for your entire target public, but maybe at other times of the year you could specify your target more and be more efficient in your correspondence. For example, in terms of discounts for back to school, it doesn't make sense to send an avalanche of advertisements and emails to all your shoppers; instead, just send information to those who meet a series of requirements.

A good text message or email just in time that is personalized and has a little detail that seems to be exclusively built in (like early access to online discounts) can bring about a greater response than a big sale that you've announced in grand style.



06 PRODUCT SELECTION: Go for the exclusive before going for the cheap

The word 'ALL' is usually quite attractive for consumers. But it is associated with a psychological reaction that really has no advantage later.

The more options someone has, the harder it is to choose. That 'ALL' invites people to hurry up and take advantage of the chance as soon as possible. However, as a business you don't want that. Instead, you want to lead your customer to the right discount (or the one that's the best for you).

That means that your planning should include whether you will apply discounts to all your products, if that discount will be the same or different depending on each category, and if you'll send special discount coupons to certain types of customers. For example, if it is Father's Day, why not promote an extra discount for consumers who send in a funny picture with their dad via the social networks?

Another useful strategy is to focus discounts only around **seasonal products**. On the one hand, these will be the most interesting products for your customers (for example, swimsuits in the summer or ski clothes in the winter) and, on the other hand, this can be a useful tactic to move that stock that you always have more of.

In addition, there isn't much preparation required on your part. You can have a landing page ready for product categories (like ties or earrings) and the landing page itself is good year round; you just have to update the **banners and popups** every sales/discount period to take your visitor to that section and apply themes related with Christmas, summer, spring, etc.

The key is for the customer to feel like he/she is choosing the right product, although in reality you have already done the work for the customer by selecting the products you want to highlight. **Gift guides** are also very useful when using these sales and discount strategies, especially because they allow you to highlight discounted products and combine them with others that do not have a discount or which are from the new collection and may actually attract the buyer more.

Don't forget to highlight, underscore, or select **reviews or testimonials** about the products that you would like to include in the promotion or season. And, to give a push to cross-selling, offer packs of complementary products or, if you want to get rid of some stock, include BOGO campaigns in which a free product is offered when a customer makes a purchase.

07

More promotion, less discounts: CREATE EXPECTATION

They say that a Friday makes us happier than a Sunday. Buyers also are more excited by preparing their wishlists and filling up their shopping cart than by finding a surprise sale.

Think ahead to each sales/discount period with something better than the discount itself: the excitement and thrill of the wait. In addition, these strategies bring about a feeling of exclusivity and urgency; buyers know that they have to act fast and pay attention to not miss out on opportunities.

Among regulars, you can launch **pre-sale and post-sale events** to generate excitement and, in addition, be rid of even more stock that didn't sell well during the sales/discount period.

Amongst the most common digital tactics, **countdown timers** work well for customers to see, second by second, the amount of time left before a sale starts. And, on a more aggressive level, individual counters on each product page to count down how long the special sale price will last.

Why don't you give it a try?



Popups

Tell your website visitors that they can add products to their cart and save them for when sales begin.



Games

Gamification is a key resource in many processes, and that is also true for ecommerce. Make discounts into a game of your choosing: finding an Easter egg with a special discount on your website or promoting a raffle in which your audience can participate on the social networks.



Sales/discount calendar

Instead of offering a general, permanent discount, prepare different promotions or flash sales for each day. This keeps shoppers' interest and allows you to vary your selection of sales/discounts. Christmas advent calendars fit well in this technique.

08 LOYALTY OVER TRAFFIC: Attract the right customers

Sales are also an excellent time to build a following. And to remind your regular customers that you are still offering quality and striving to meet their needs with new items, special discounts, and custom suggestions.

Many times your current customer base can be a springboard for you to get new customers. Generating good references or referrals is a great strategy to make your customers recommend your products or brand to families and friends. Offering **discount codes or special coupons** if people recommend your brand can multiply interest in your promotions to a greater extent than with a general campaign.

Another means for keeping and attracting customers is to turn to a **loyalty program** for your most faithful customers allowing them to access more exclusive deals. Sometimes, seeing how well customers are treated throughout the year is much more attractive than a one-time discount.

09 WEBSITE PERFORMANCE: Get ready for the worst

Digitalization also brings about drawbacks, and online demand during sales and discount periods can be so intense that servers can fail at any time.

That's why a good way to ensure your income during these times is to plan well and reinforce your inventory in physical shops and online, as well as reinforcing your website activity. The aim: to avoid demand spikes that make your business explode in any sense.

Planning for sales also implies checking, with your technical team, to see if everything is working correctly and having contingency and quick-response plans in place in the event of problems with the **online checkout or payment process**, slow loading pages, and up-to-date inventory levels across all your sales channels. **Website speed tests** will tell you about the general state of your site, the amount of traffic it can bear, and how to optimize it to guarantee the best performance.

You may not experience any of these problems... and that will probably be the case if you have done your homework beforehand. In the event that they do occur, the best response is to keep your customers informed at all times of the technical problems that are happening.

10

EXTRAS: Put a bow on the experience

Less discounts and more satisfaction?

Many times, buyers seek other advantages rather than a high discount percent. Try adding extra little details that can convince buyers in doubt and invite satisfied customers to come back:

- ⚡ Free shipping
- ⚡ An extra gift upon checkout
- ⚡ A discount code for the next visit
- ⚡ Free gift wrapping during the holidays



A dark teal background with a spiral-bound calendar visible. The calendar is open to a page showing the days of the week (FRI, SAT, SUN) and some dates (2, 3, 9, 10). The number 03 is prominently displayed in a large, bold, yellow font.

03

**Get your calendar
ready: Key dates
for sales in 2021
around the world**

We usually think of the big sales/discount periods being after Christmas and in the summer. But we are living in a time of continuous discount strategies, and dozens of special occasions can be taken advantage of throughout the year.

Sales and discount periods can be divided into two categories:

- ⚡ Seasonal sales (associated with a few weeks or months of the year)
- ⚡ Event-based sales (associated with worldwide or national holidays)

In the first category, there are the typical sales around Christmas and in January, while in the second category there is a wide range of options throughout the entire year – especially if you are selling in several countries.

Here's a list of the most popular commercial events for manufacturers and retailers which may help you to design your own sales/discount calendar.

The biggest special events for sales in 2021



