Holiday Campaign Playbook: Sleigh the Competition

Holiday campaigns that made a lasting impact

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It's the most wonderful time of the year.

The holidays are the gift that keeps on giving to any company with a digital presence. From virtual friendsgivings to eCommerce shopping sprees, there's plenty to be jolly about if you have business online.

Still, there are loads of competitors out there trying to grab a piece of the seasonal special customer pie. After all, global internet traffic climbed 20% October to January 2020 YoY alone.

To sleigh the competition, you need a campaign founded in data and backed by real-time insights.

We'll walk you through three holiday campaigns that made a lasting impression last year to show you how to plan, execute, and make the most of your holiday marketing campaigns even when the season's over.

🎁 **Companies spreading the holiday cheer**

🛒 H-E-B

☕ Starbucks

💖 Ugg

METHODOLOGY

This report is based on data pulled using Similarweb Digital Research Intelligence. Insights are primarily based on performance data for the 2020 holiday season and through Q2 2021.

H-E-B, a supermarket ahead of its time

Texan supermarket chain **H-E-B** wanted to use technology to create some unexpected holiday cheer in 2020. That's why they partnered with Facebook on a limited series of **augmented reality filters** that would bring seasonal joy to their followers' cameras, and could be used inside H-E-B stores or at home.

🎥 Photo-ops and video overlays

Three filters were launched as part of the campaign — one which created a virtual photo-op with Santa Claus, and two video overlays that turned the user's camera view into a snow globe or a winter wonderland scene.

📈 An omnicanal experience

Interactive in-store experiences complemented the filters, and brought them to customers who may not already have been following H-E-B on social media. Shoppers could scan QR codes placed on seasonal products around H-E-B locations, and discover the filters that way too.

While each filter did include a 'learn more' button that would take users to the company's website, the campaign was intended to **create good experiences** and **build relationships**, rather than expressly push sales.

What makes this a great holiday campaign:

❄️ **It gives customers value** — free, fun, interactive social media filters

❄️ **It's overtly holiday-centric,** but in a fresh, creative way

❄️ **It's sensitive to the unusual 2020 holiday season**, when in-person visits with Santa were mostly off-limits

H-E-B holiday insights:

1

The holidays outperform COVID-19

H-E-B's holiday campaign paid off. Traffic during the 2020 holiday season rose dramatically, peaking in January 2021 with **5 million** visits in Texas. Not only is this higher than traffic during the height of the pandemic, but it's **70% more** than the 2019 holiday season.

Monthly Visits, heb.com
Texas, Desktop, Sep. 2019 – Mar. 2021
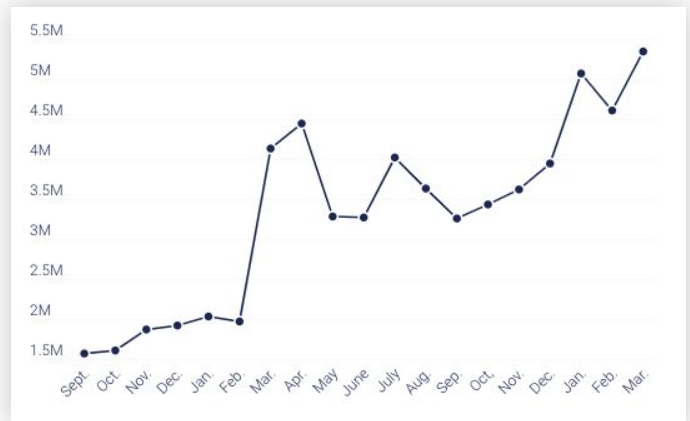
2

Facebook influences social traffic

Facebook was responsible for **25-30% of the total social traffic** to heb.com during the 2020 holiday. From October-December 2020 there were 180K total social visits to heb.com (1.6% of the total desktop traffic in Texas). Campaigns like H-E-B's augmented reality filters **capitalize on social media's importance as a marketing channel.**

Facebook Social Traffic (%)
Texas, Desktop, Sept 2020 – April 2021

3

Holiday meal prep leads search traffic

In December 2020, there are **32.9K total search** visits to heb.com. Top organic non-branded keywords shows that **shopping for their holiday meal** was top of mind for consumers last year. For example *brisket, riverside turkey, beef stew, sweet potato casserole,* and *little debbie christmas tree cakes* were all in the top 25 most searched keywords of the time.

Keyword Analysis
Texas, Desktop, December 2020

Organic Non-Branded Keywords

1	curbside (4.5% of total search visits)
2	brisket (1.2%)
3	riverside turkey (1.2%)
4	bbq (1.0%)
5	peanut butter (0.9%)
6	carolina reaper cheese puffs (0.8%)
7	silly cow farms hot chocolate (0.7%)

Starbucks gives back

☕ Last year, **Starbucks** celebrated the holidays by giving back to customers in Project Give Good. The coffee maker handed out **$1 million worth of Starbucks Cards** in December and awarded extra rewards to some customers through their Starbucks Card and Starbucks Sweepstakes programs.

👋 Staff joined in the fun

Teams dressed in fun, seasonal red and green aprons, and handed out the cards in person.

It wasn't just about the money — Starbucks' goal was to **bring joy to the holiday season** by creating opportunities for friends, family and loved ones to spend time together over a coffee, without worrying about the cost.

📸 #GiveGood Campaign

During the campaign, Starbucks also took advantage of **user-generated content (UGC)** by sharing pictures of beautifully decorated Starbucks cups that customers had shared under the #GiveGood hashtag.

What makes this a great holiday campaign:

❄️ **It taps into holiday feelings** of sharing, generosity, and spending time with loved ones

❄️ **It's a contest-style campaign** to encourage engagement

❄️ **It includes giving back** like Starbucks 'gave back' to their community

❄️ **It harnesses social sharing** with user-generated content

Starbucks holiday insights:

1

Monthly Visits, starbucks.com
U.S., Desktop, July 2020 – March 2021

Starbucks gets a seasonal boost

Traffic to starbucks.com jumped **24% to 4.9 million visits** in December 2020. Other traffic metrics followed a similar pattern: there were 3M unique visitors in December 2020, **a 24% increase** compared to the month before and 32.3M page views, **a 29% increase.**

2

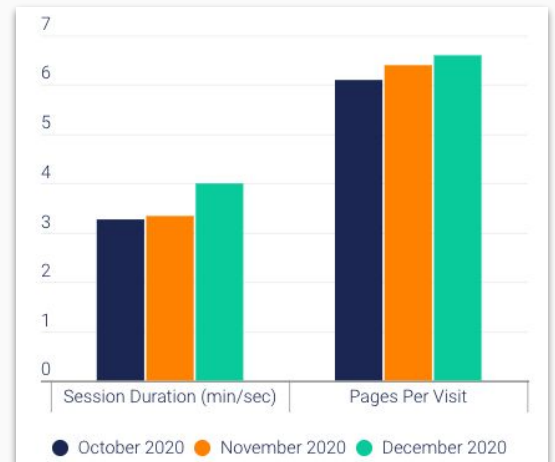Engagement Overview, starbucks.com
U.S., Desktop, Oct–Dec. 2020

Consumers are more engaged

Between October - December 2020, there were spikes in three key engagement metrics for starbucks.com. People were **spending more time on the website, browsing through more pages, and weren't bouncing** to competitor websites as quickly as before. Don't forget the lower the bounce rate, the better!

3

Audience Loyalty – Starbucks, Dunkin Donuts, and Peets
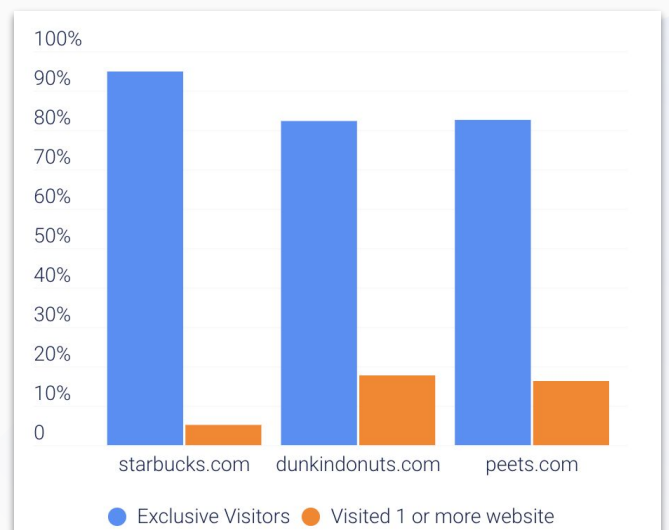U.S., Desktop, December 2020

Starbucks fans are the most loyal coffee drinkers

Compared to its main competitors, Starbucks has the most loyal customers, especially over the holidays. In December 2020, 95% of visitors to starbucks.com were exclusive, almost 10% more than its closest competitor. Only 5% of visitors to starbucks.com visited 1 or more other website, for dunkindonuts.com that figure jumped to 17.6%. Starbucks drinkers are satisfied and don't go looking for other options.

UGG spreads warmth for care workers

Instead of choosing celebrities for their holiday 2020 campaign, the Australian accessories brand UGG did something unconventional — UGG **highlighted community leaders and healthcare heroes** who played instrumental roles in the fight against COVID-19.

💰 Putting their money where their mouth is

UGG showcased **three real-life heroes** in their #FeelLove campaign, donating $50,000 to each cause alongside magazine-quality image and text content to tell their stories.

👣 Reaching out to followers

But they shared the love with their audience, too. Through the #FeelLove and #UGGTogether hashtags, they invited their audience to **nominate their own heroes**, who would then be entered to win UGG products.

What a cozy, caring, and positive way to celebrate a challenging holiday season!

What makes this a great holiday campaign:

❄️ **A charitable campaign** that also centers the struggles of COVID-19

❄️ **A contest** customers enter by sharing user-generated content

❄️ **Brings up holiday season feelings** of coziness, love, and community

Ugg holiday insights:

1

Consumers respond positively to "feel good" campaigns

Year-over-year traffic to ugg.com gradually increases around the holidays as consumers shop for gifts. However, following the holiday campaign from 2020 traffic was 34% higher in November 2020 than in 2019, and 23% higher in December.

Monthly Visits chart showing June 2019-March 2020 (orange) and June 2020-March 2021 (dark blue)

2

Ugg converts new users

Ugg converts new users

In December 2020, there nearly three times as many more new users to ugg.com than returning. This suggests that **the holiday campaign was successful in targeting new users and successful converting them into customers**. In December there were 919K new users, compared to 397K returning ones.

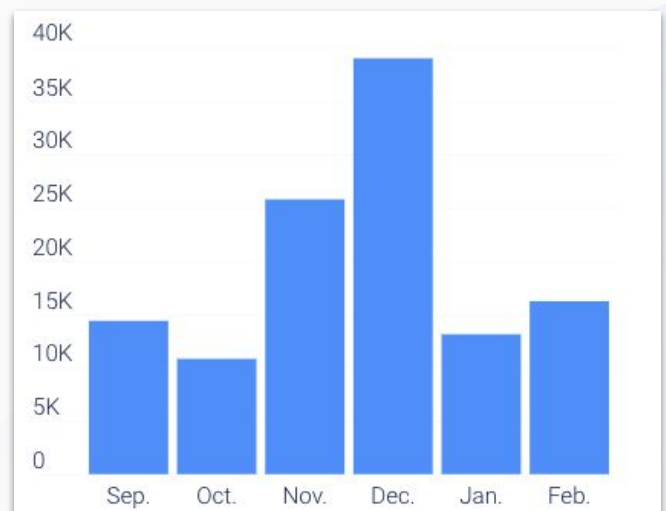Pie chart: 30.1% and 69.9% — New Users ● Returning Users ●
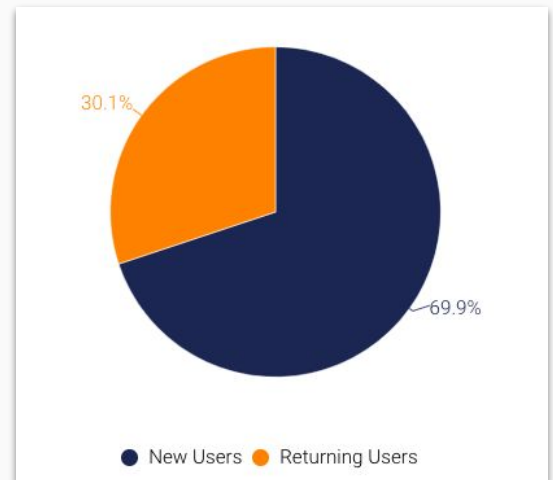
3

Referrals trend up before the holidays

Any good marketing campaign relies on effective affiliate partnerships to spread the world. For ugg.com, referral traffic steadily increased between September and December 2020, before a sharp decrease in January 2021 when most holidays campaigns usually end.

Top referral websites to ugg.com include: deckers.com, groupon.com, rakuten.com, afterpay.com, and retailmenot.com

Referral Traffic bar chart Sep. through Feb.

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Optimize your holiday strategy

Analyze your market and your competitive landscape

Schedule a demo