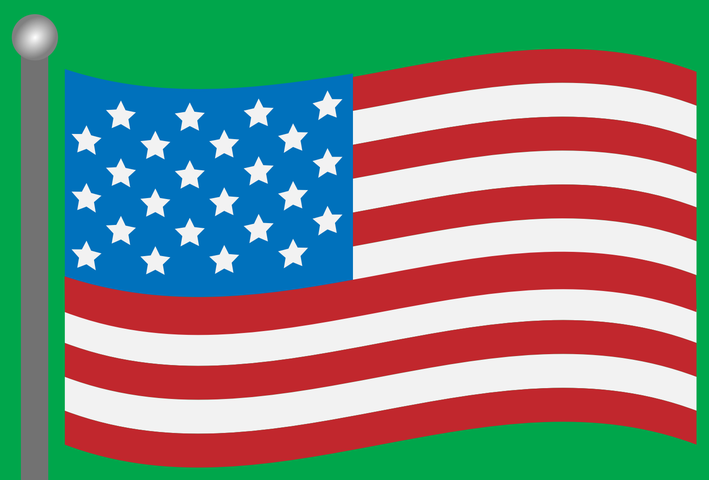
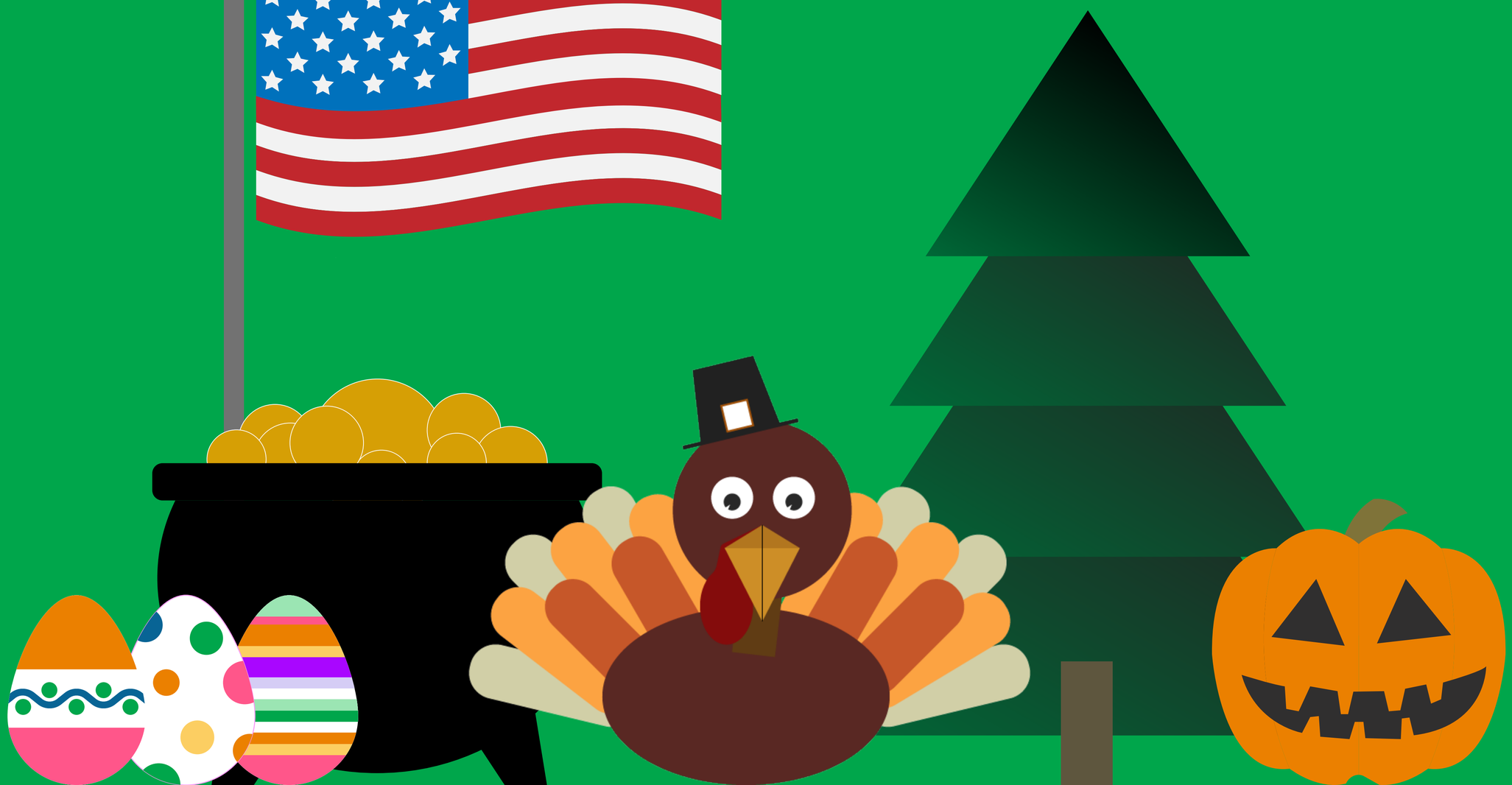
justuno

2017

Marketing Calendar for E-Commerce





Introduction

This e-book intensively covers the topic of holiday promotions and how online businesses can leverage key sales dates to drive more leads and sales. With a complete calendar, specific info for each key date, and helpful examples, you have everything you need to run high converting seasonal promotions.

While much of the information within this e-book is specific to e-commerce retailers, the same framework can be applied to B2B businesses, publishers, and bloggers. Even if you aren't selling products on your website, implementing seasonal marketing practices can help you increase visitor engagement and conversion rates.

2017 Holiday Schedule

VALENTINE'S DAY	FEB 14	INDEPENDENCE DAY	JUL 4
PRESIDENT'S DAY	FEB 20	LABOR DAY	SEP 4
ST. PATRICK'S DAY	MAR 17	HALLOWEEN	OCT 31
APRIL FOOL'S DAY	APR 1	VETERAN'S DAY	NOV 11
EASTER	APR 16	THANKSGIVING	NOV 23
EARTH DAY	APR 22	BLACK FRIDAY	NOV 24
CINCO DE MAYO	MAY 5	CYBER MONDAY	NOV 27
MOTHER'S DAY	MAY 14	GREEN MONDAY	DEC 11
MEMORIAL DAY	MAY 29	FREE SHIPPING DAY	DEC 16
FATHER'S DAY	JUN 18	CHRISTMAS	DEC 25

Valentine's Day - February 14

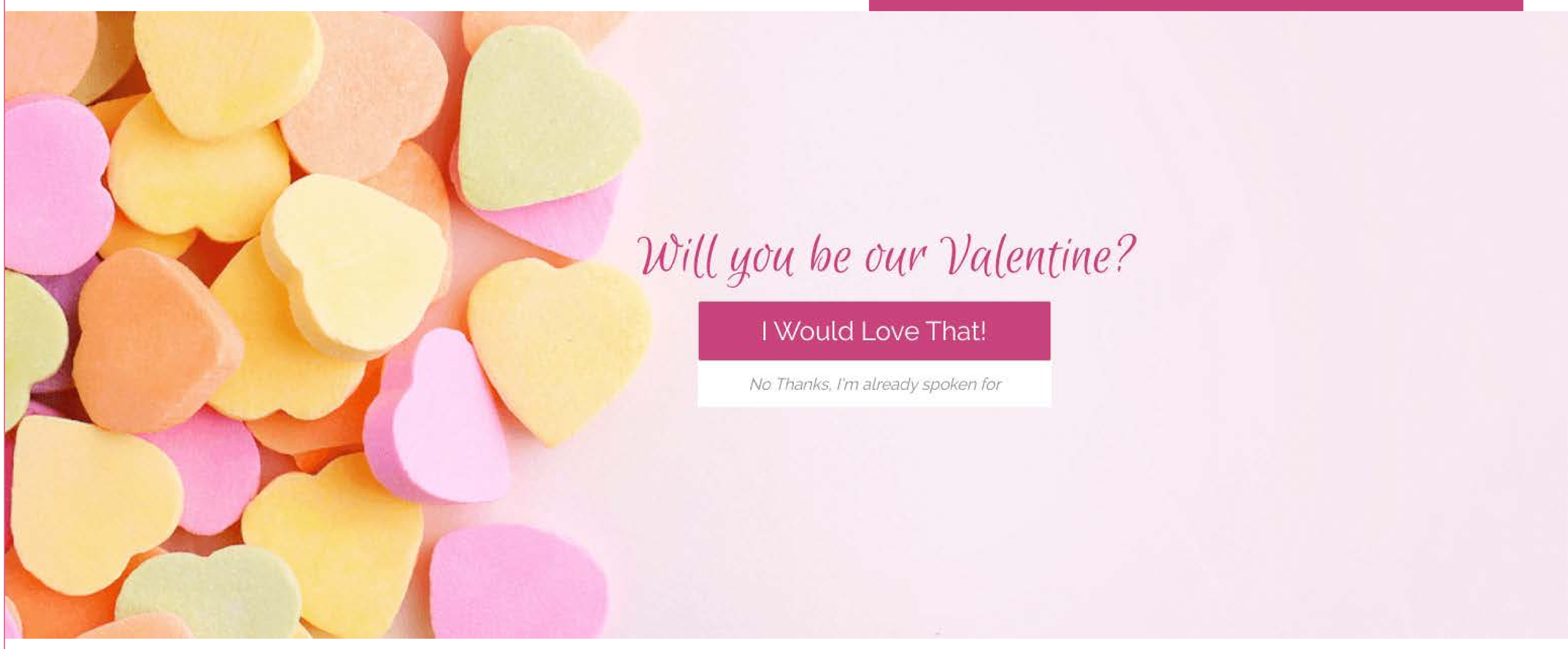
Valentine's Day e-commerce sales totaled almost $20 million in the U.S. alone[1]. It's the first big sales holiday of the year so make it count. Keep in mind that Valentine's Day is not just for romance. Consumers will spend money on family members, children, co-workers, pets, and so on. Even if you don't sell traditional Valentine's Day products, use the opportunity to reach out to leads and past customers.

Key Product Categories:

- Candy
- Greeting Cards
- Flowers
- Jewelry
- Clothing
- Dining
- Travel

Key Takeaways:

- ☑ Use pop ups & promotions to engage shoppers on-site
- ☑ Run a cart abandonment promotion



Key Valentine's Day Stats:

- ☑ Cart abandonment is high. 76% for Retail and 86% for Travel[2]
- ☑ Onsite prompts (pop up, message) help conversion rates. 28% click to conversion rate for Retail and 12% for Travel
- ☑ Re-engagement emails work. 5% conversion rate for Retail and 23% conversion rate for Travel

[1] https://www.statista.com/statistics/285028/us-valentine-s-day-sales/

[2] https://www.veinteractive.com/us/blog/infographic-valentines-day-ecommerce-stats-part-i/

February

President's Day (USA) - February 20

Celebrate the founding fathers of the U.S. with a heavy dose of capitalism! President's Day sales are typically used to clear out holiday and winter season inventory. This date is also a great time to showcase new spring arrivals.

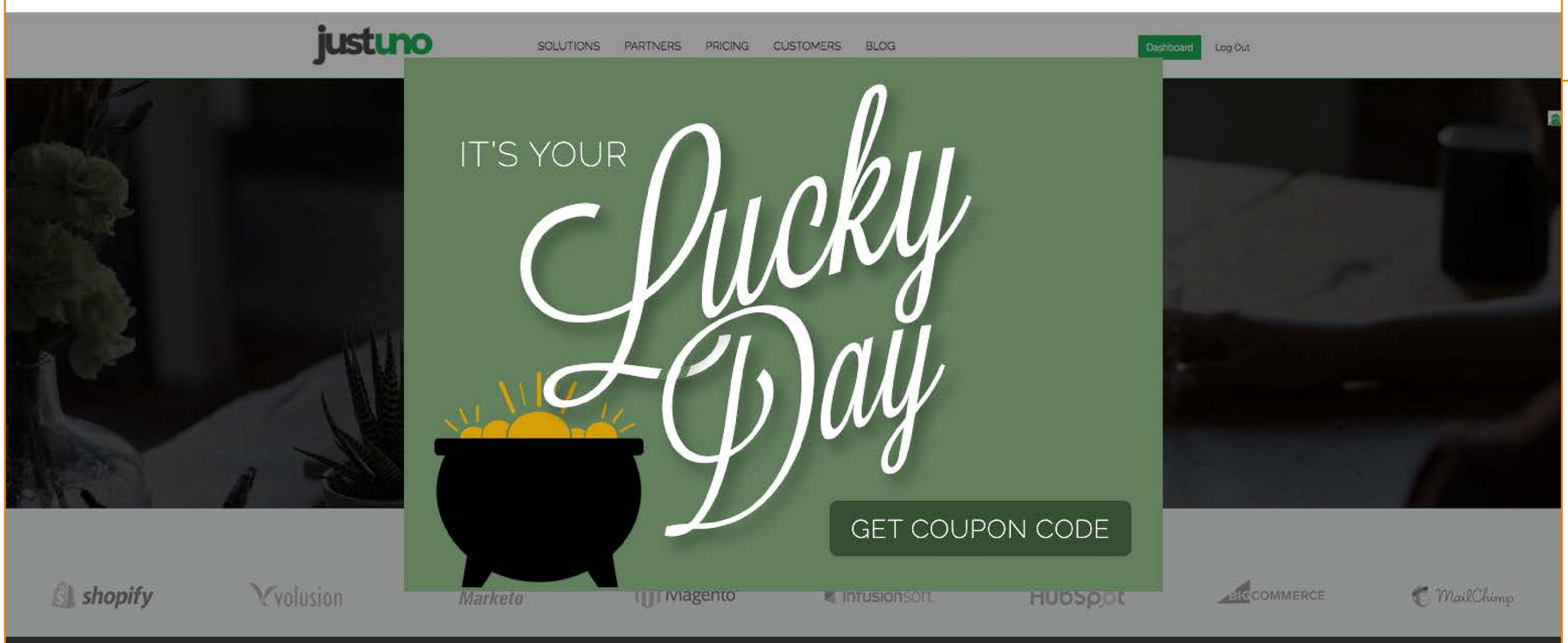
Key Takeaways:

Run an end of winter, beginning of spring, or clearance sale

March

St. Patrick's Day - March 17

St. Patrick's Day is always a fun holiday. Make your shopping experience fun for your shoppers to help keep them active on your site!



Key Takeaways:

Create a St. Patrick's day promotion to engage shoppers & include discount or free shipping incentives for an extra sales push before the end of Q1.

April Fool's Day - April 1

April Fool's is an excellent time to use humor and fun in your marketing. Drive traffic to your site with fun emails, intriguing social posts, and potentially a promotion.

Key Takeaways:
Be funny, but still very clear with your marketing message. Confusion always hurts conversions!

Easter - April 16

Easter is positioned perfectly on the calendar for the big summer sales push. Summer still hasn't arrived but this is when consumers start looking to gear up on summer items. Easter themed designs are also very fun! Ask us how to run an Easter egg hunt for a discount on your site!

Key Takeaways:
Use this opportunity to market items for warmer weather and get people excited about the months to come.

Earth Day - April 22

Not a big fan of eggs? How about using another spherical object to promote your summer sales? Earth Day is a big promotional favorite for outdoor brands. It's also often overlooked by many e-commerce businesses.

Key Takeaways:
Use this under-utilized sales date to better reach email subscribers with promotional messaging

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Cinco de Mayo - May 5

The Mexican holiday celebrating the victory of the Battle of Puebla is huge in America! Americans are massive fans of General Ignacio Zaragoza...oh sorry, I meant tequila. This is another opportunity to engage shoppers with a fun promotion via email and on-site.

Key Takeaways:

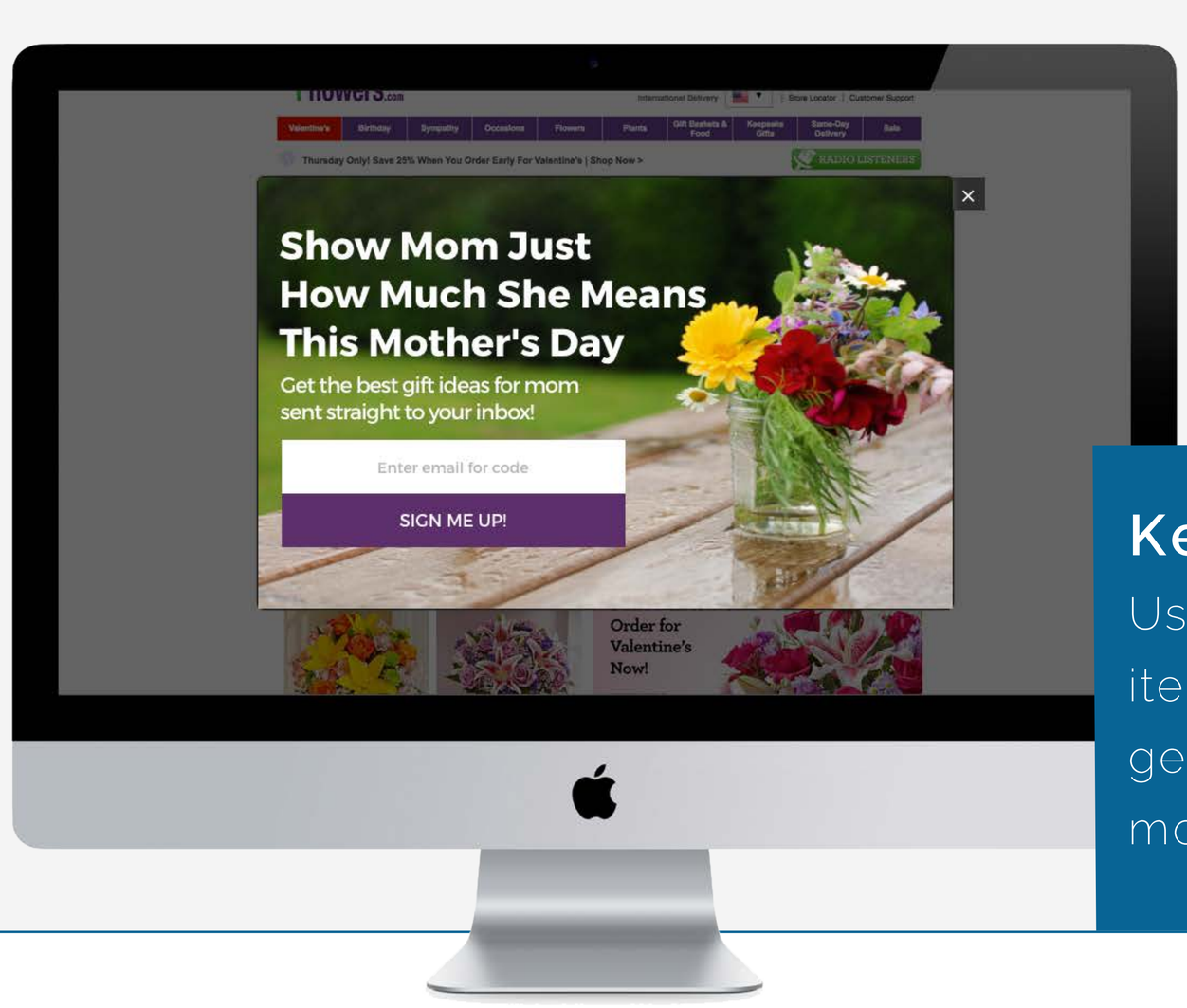
Drive seasonal summer sales with bright, fun on-site promotions.

Mother's Day - May 14

There is money to be made during the shopping period for Mother's Day. Aside from the holiday season, Mother's day provides the biggest opportunity for sales. Everyone has a special mother or woman in their life who deserves something on Mother's Day.

Key Product Categories:

- Jewelry
- Flowers
- Clothing
- Electronics Gift Cards



Key Takeaways:

Use this opportunity to market items for warmer weather and get people excited about the months to come.

Memorial Day - May 29

While you should have already been marketing warm weather goods earlier, Memorial day is the key date in kicking off summer.

Key Takeaways:

- [x] Push your summer products hard
- [x] Run a summer contest to collect emails (think slow summer months, holiday season)

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June

Father's Day - June 18

While it doesn't quite boast the sales numbers of Mother's Day, Father's Day has quickly become a big ecommerce sales date.

Father's Day marketing campaigns should start shortly after Mother's Day.

Key Takeaways:

- ☑ Dads are hard to buy for.
- ☑ Create buying guides & dad focused landing pages
- ☑ Offer free shipping, present info on ship dates (this is a time sensitive holiday, people need their orders in time!)

July

Independence Day (USA) - July 4

Summer sales are slow but consumers get pumped over the 4th of July. If you sell anything relating to America, this is the sales holiday for you!

Key Takeaways:

Use this key date to drive traffic to your site during the slow summer months. Get festive with email, social, & on-site promotions.

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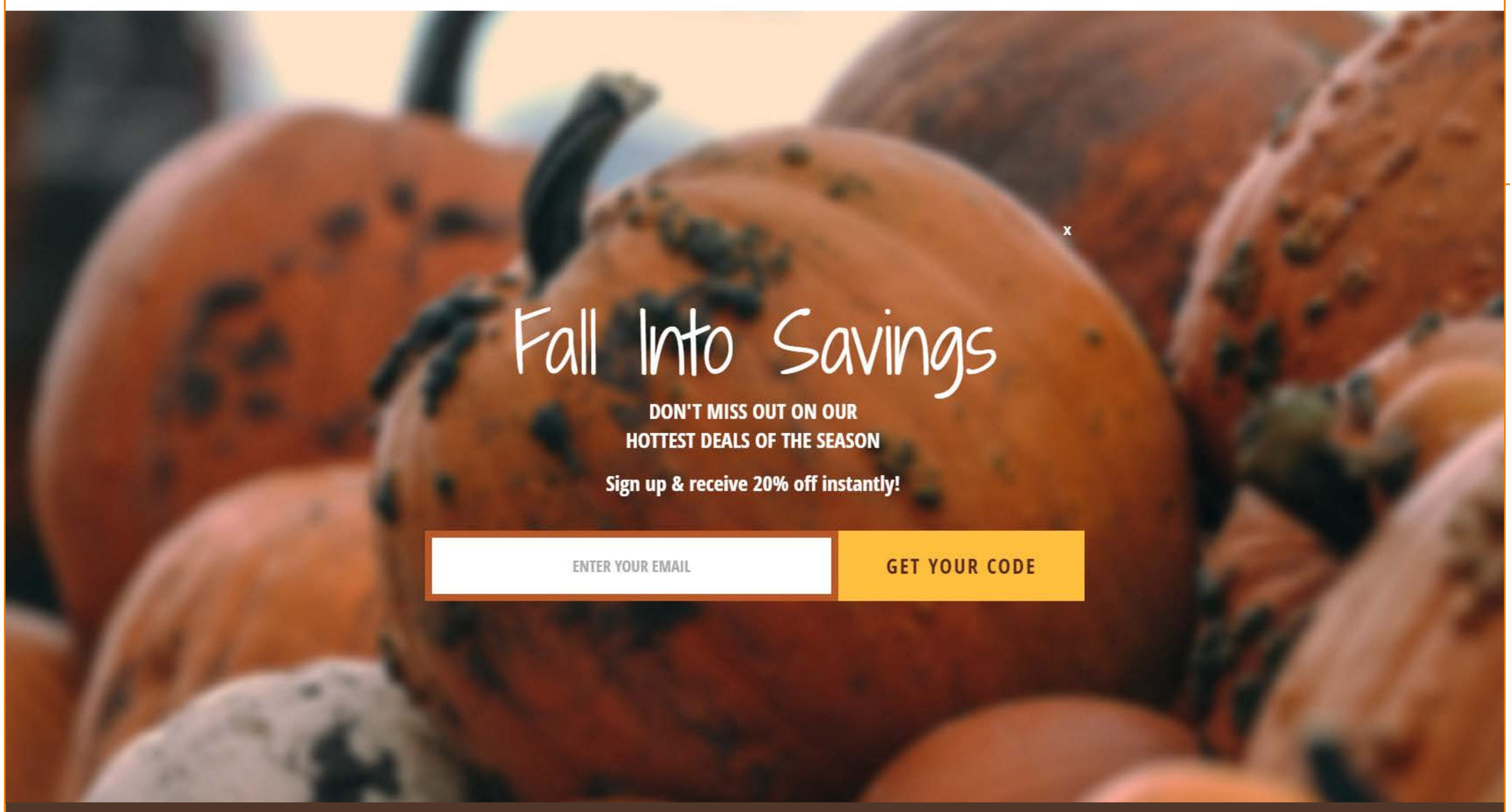
Veteran's Day (USA) - November 11

Show appreciation for the men and women who have served in the US armed forces by offering special promotions and discounts to veterans! Or just run a big sale to entice early holiday shoppers.

Thanksgiving (USA) - November 23

Thanksgiving is a great time for friends, family, football, and most importantly food! It also marks the beginning of the most hectic time for online retailers. Enjoy yourself but find some time to go through some last minute checks before the crazy shopping begins.



Key Takeaways:

This is a great time to send out Black Friday and Cyber Monday reminders with a holiday theme. Enjoy this holiday and use it as a purpose to reach out.

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Black Friday - November 24

Black Friday means you have a lot of things to take account of. Make sure your promotions are ready to go beforehand so you can focus on other things that will be going on (support, inventory, website hosting, etc.)

Key Takeaways:

- ☑ This sales date requires a ton of preparation, don't take it lightly.
- ☑ Market early and consistently.
- ☑ Use a Black Friday promotion provided by Justuno! We've got you covered
- ☑ Focus on lead generation throughout the year to make a better Black Friday
- ☑ Run limited time sales, discount when you can, and offer free shipping.

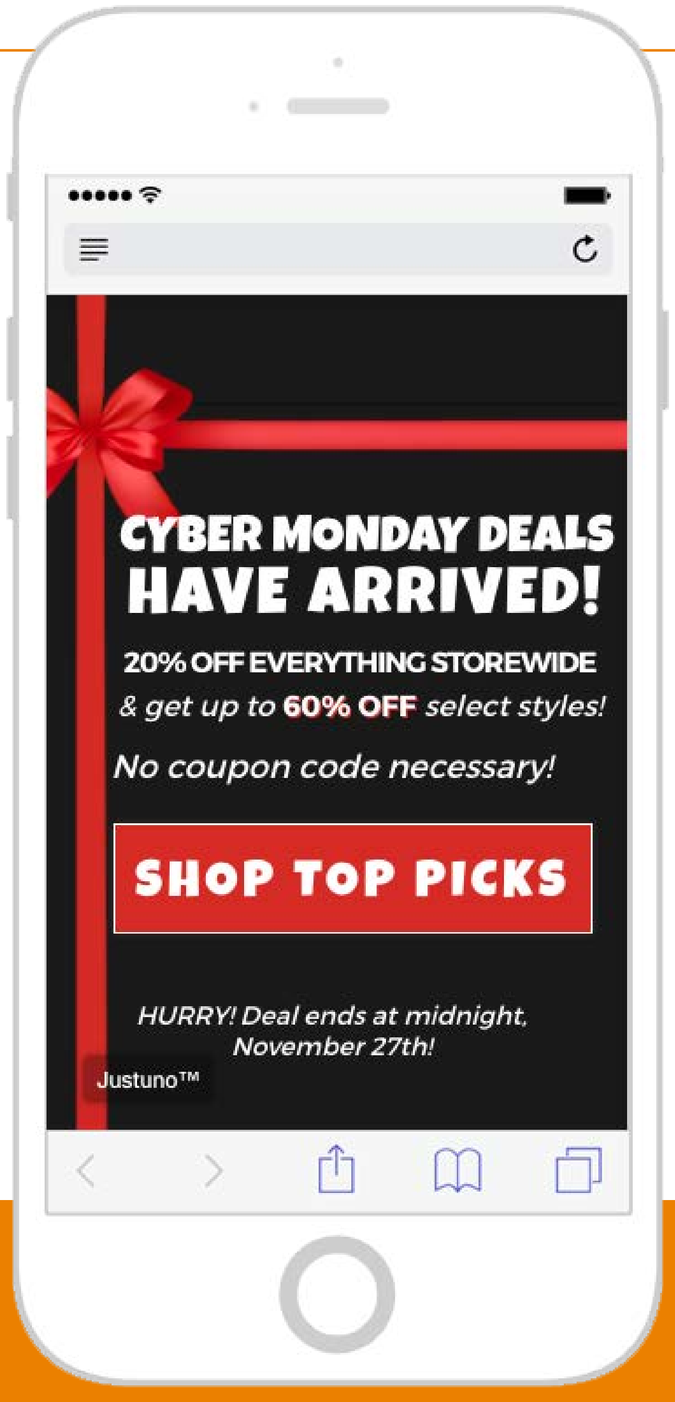
Key Black Friday Stats:

- ☑ Black Friday accounted for $3.34 Billion in online sales last year[3]
- ☑ $1.2 Billion in Black Friday mobile sales
- ☑ Desktop Conversion rates are 2X higher than mobile conversion rates
- ☑ Average dollar amount spent per person has been around $400 over the last 3 years

[3] http://www.inquisitr.com/3748502/black-friday-sales-figures-2016-online-sales-hit-new-record-with-3-34-billion-in-purchases/

Cyber Monday - November 27

Black Friday and Cyber Monday have essentially meshed into a 4 day sales weekend called Cyber Weekend. Whether you choose to market your sales separately or all together, the same things apply.

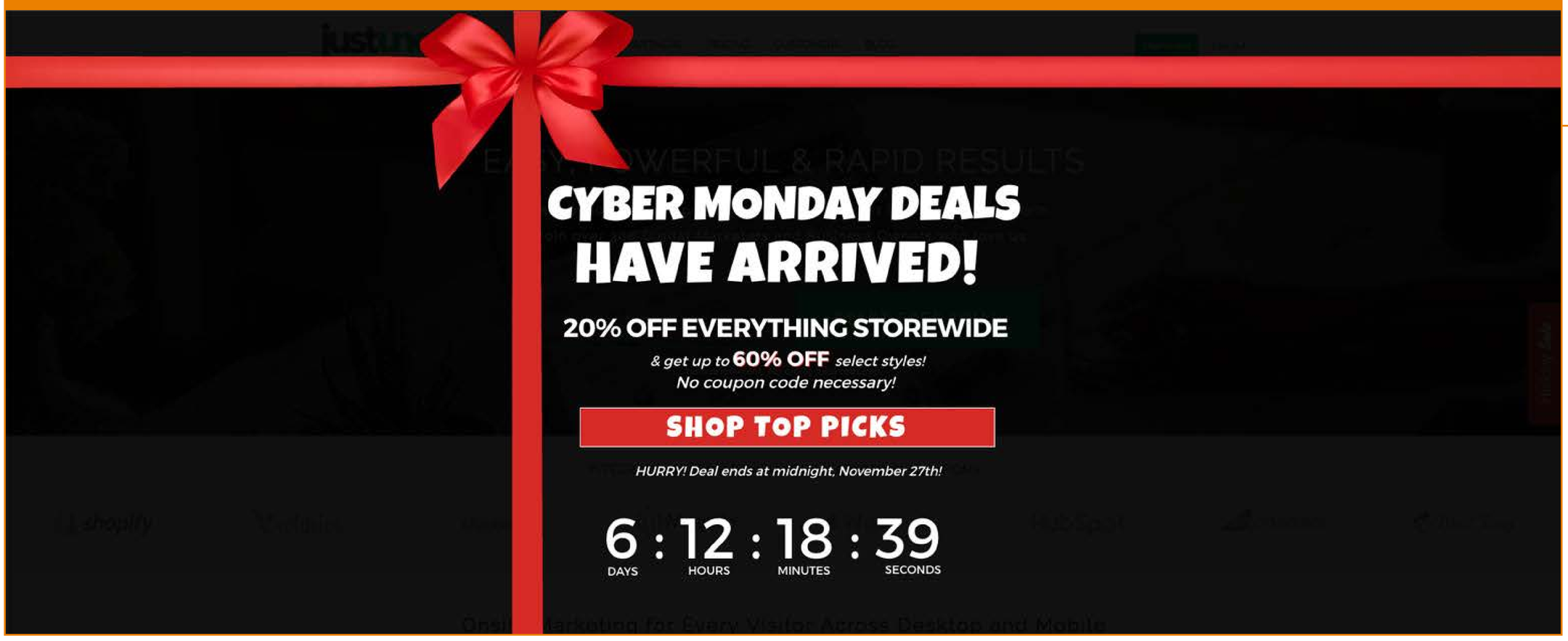


Key Cyber Monday Stats:

- ☑ A record $3.45 Billion in sales last year[4]
- ☑ Desktop traffic surprisingly dominated over mobile

Key Takeaways:

- ☑ Present a call-to-action pop up to direct shoppers to your sales pages
- ☑ Use an exit offer on the cart page to drive same visit sales
- ☑ Extend Black Friday sales through Cyber Monday



[4] http://www.practicalecommerce.com/articles/131369-Sales-Report-2016-Thanksgiving-Day-Black-Friday-Cyber-Monday

Green Monday - December 11

Green Monday is the largest online sales day in December, especially since there are still plenty of motivated shoppers looking to cross items off their lists.

Key Takeaways:

Run sales promotions on your site with a holiday themed pop up.& strongly consider offering free shipping. As the big holidays approach, shipping will be a strong deciding factor.

Free Shipping Day - December 16

Free Shipping Day is a day in which retailers are encouraged to offer free shipping with delivery in time for Christmas Eve. The event has grown in popularity & is an excellent driver of sales from businesses that participate.

Key Takeaways:

- ☑ Offer free shipping on orders if it makes sense with your margins.
- ☑ You can also use free shipping thresholds to increase your order sizes. For example, if my average cart size is $50, then I would offer free shipping on orders of $75 or more. This increases cart sizes and makes free shipping more accessible for your business.

Christmas - December 25

By now, the majority of the holiday work should be finished and you can relax...for a day. Then you have to deal with returns, exchanges, and back orders.

Key Takeaways:

In the week between Christmas & New Years, push clearance items to flush inventory so you can start fresh in the following year!

September

Labor Day (USA) - September 4

End of summer & back-to-school are the two themes that go along with Labor Day. This is the ultimate time for a quarterly sale.

Key Takeaways:

- ☑ Run a clearance sale on summer items
- ☑ Market back-to-school specific products

October

Halloween - October 31

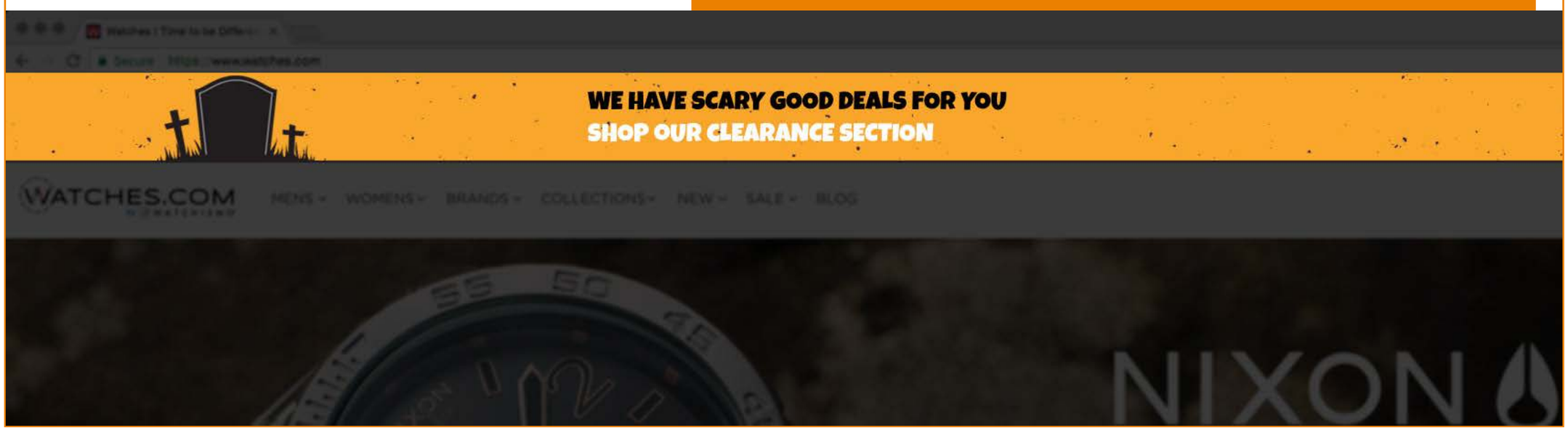
Halloween is the 4th largest e-commerce sales holiday and it's a super fun time of the year. There are tons of creative things you can do with design, copy and marketing. A great way to BOOst on-site engagement during the Halloween season is with a spooky halloween themed pop up promotion!

Key Product Categories:

Costumes
Decorations
Candy
Dental Hygiene Products (A pathetic attempt at humor)

Key Takeaways:

- ☑ Market early. This is a time-sensitve holiday so be upfront about shipping time & cost.
- ☑ Get crafty with design & marketing copy
- ☑ Run a free shipping promotion!



Seasonal Sales Opportunities

Beginning of the Year Clearance Sales

You've just finished up with the busiest and most lucrative time for ecommerce retailers. Time to relax, right? Not so fast. You're most likely dealing with excess inventory and it's in your best interest to clear that inventory to make room for this year's stock. Use clearance sales, bundling, and other tactics to move old and slow moving products. For a full list of ideas for clearing inventory, read 14 ways to turn excess inventory into cash.

Summer Sales are Slow, Prepare and Execute Early

July is the slowest month for e-commerce with sales dipping by 30% compared to big sales months like December[5]. August is also particularly slow early on until back to school sales start to kick in.

If you're selling items specifically for summer, it's imperative that you prepare and execute your marketing strategy early. You want your summer shoppers completing purchases in April, May and June before things start to slow down. Luckily, you have several big sales holidays in that time frame that you can use to get people to your site. Here are some additional marketing ideas to help you during slow online sales months.

Back to School Sales

Back to school shoppers start as early as april. Yes, 40% of B2S sales occur in August but over 50% of B2S sales occur before August[6]. In the early summer months, it's beneficial to craft a marketing strategy that specifically focuses on reaching B2S shoppers.

Holiday Sales

Much of the focus during the holiday season goes to Black Friday and Cyber Monday. This makes total sense. That weekend is the biggest opportunity to drive sales. However, the competition is fierce and putting all your eggs in one basket puts way too much reliance on a 4 day span.

Instead, start marketing to your shoppers early, stay consistent, and look for other sales opportunities. Green Monday is the biggest day for sales in December. Small Business Saturday (11/25) should be a big focus for smaller retailers. Free Shipping Day is perfect for driving last minute holiday sales. Q4 is going to be your biggest sales period so get strategic and seek out less obvious sales opportunities in addition to Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

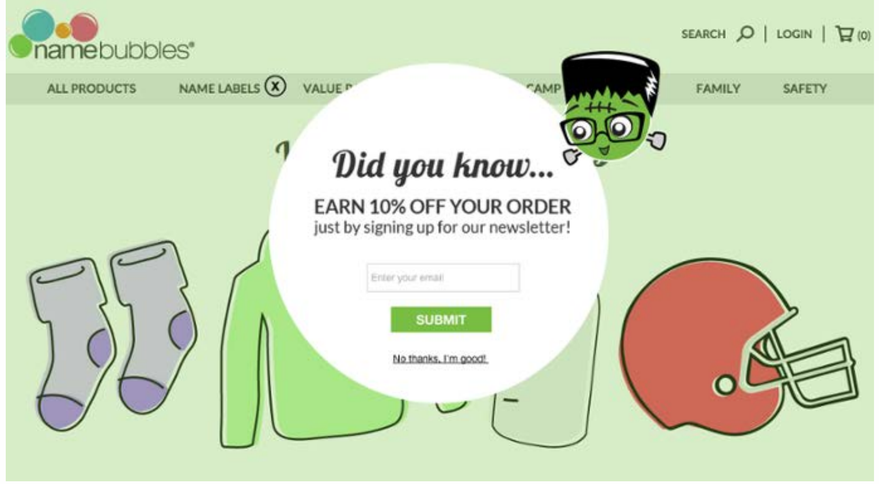
[5] https://gigaom.com/2012/06/25/when-do-summer-shoppers-splurge-online/

[6] http://blog.justuno.com/back-to-school-sales-marketing-infographic

Choosing a Type of Promotion

Email Pop Up - List Building

The most valuable pre-transactional conversion. Email remains the most effective marketing channel for driving sales and also opens you up to a variety of marketing opportunities. While your ultimate goal with big sales dates is converting a sale, acquiring an email can pay big dividends in the long run. Here are the benefits of getting an email:



1. Identify the visitor and can now view them as a lead
2. Directly market to leads via email marketing
3. Trigger automated email campaigns
4. Fuel Facebook ad campaigns
   (custom audiences and lookalike audiences)
5. Trigger cart abandonment campaigns

Note: Very rarely do first time visitors complete a purchase on their first visit. Target first time visitors with an email capture promotion while targeting your repeat visitors and current customers with more sales focused messaging.

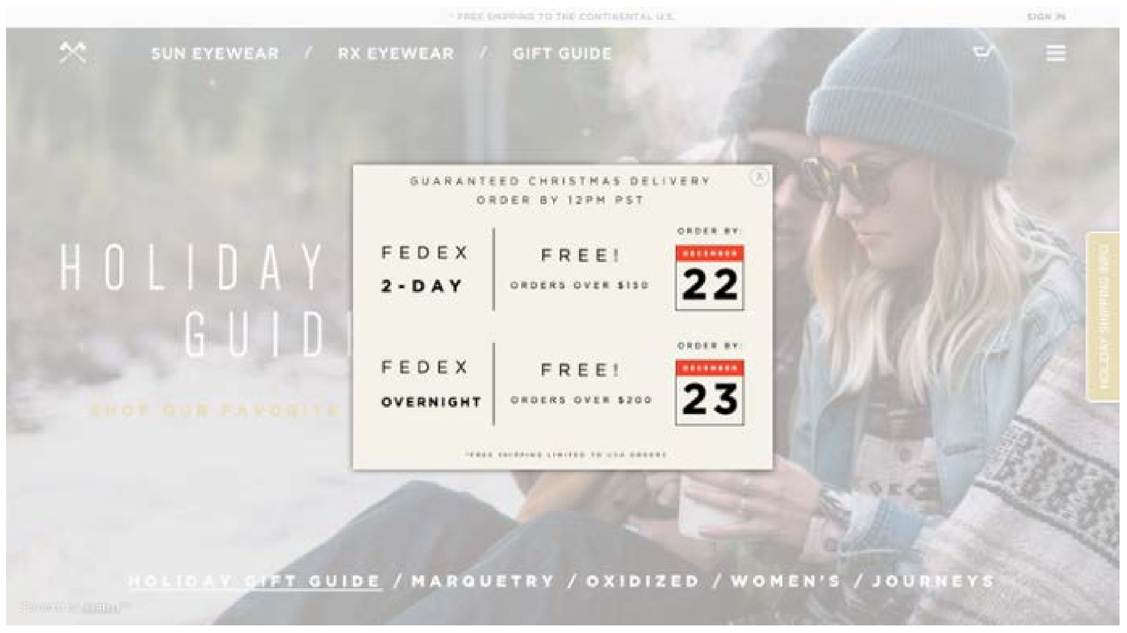
Call-to-Action Pop Up/Bar - Funnel Traffic

An overlooked type of conversion. A CTA click directs website visitors to key pages of your website. This could be a high converting product page, a sale page, or important information on shipping cost and time. The purpose of a CTA click is to direct shoppers to pages of your website where they are more likely to purchase. Prompting a visitor with a CTA tends to be for prospects in the middle of the funnel but is certainly not restricted to that use. An effective way to engage visitors with a CTA is a CTA pop up or unobar.

Global Site Messaging - Inform Visitors

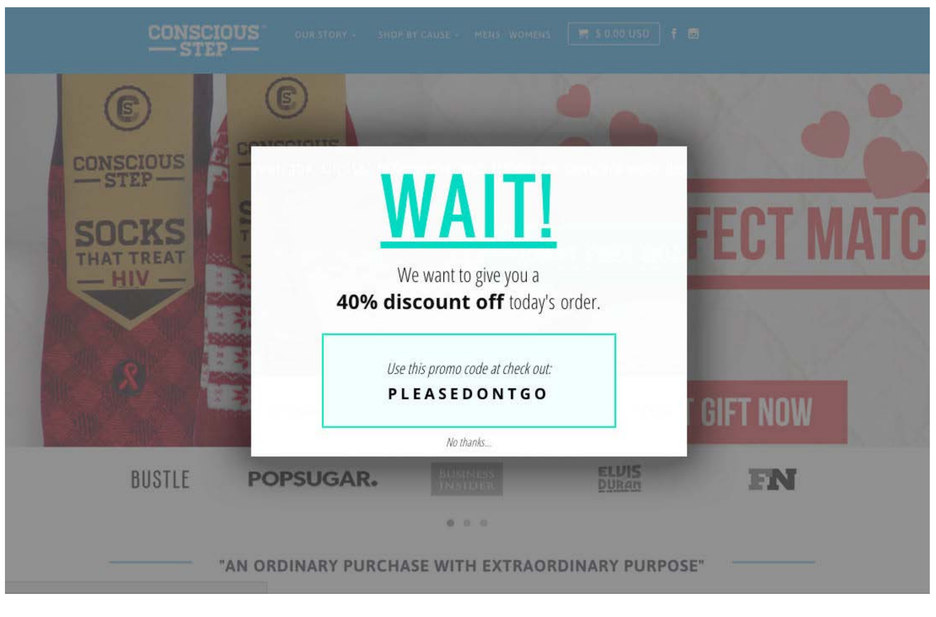
Sometimes you need to inform every visitor of something important. This could be a free shipping threshold (Order of $100+, receive free shipping), ship dates for time-sensitive holidays, new product announcements, etc. The best way to accomplish this is with a messaging bar at the top or bottom of the browser window.

Here's a first hand experience where I wish a site would have provided some messaging. I had a last minute Christmas gift idea for my brother. It was December 21st and I needed to know if I could get the item by Christmas. Unfortunately, there was no messaging on cut off dates for items to arrive by Christmas. The absence of simple messaging caused me (and probably many others) to leave the site without purchasing.



Don't miss out on sales from motivated shoppers just because you don't provide enough information!

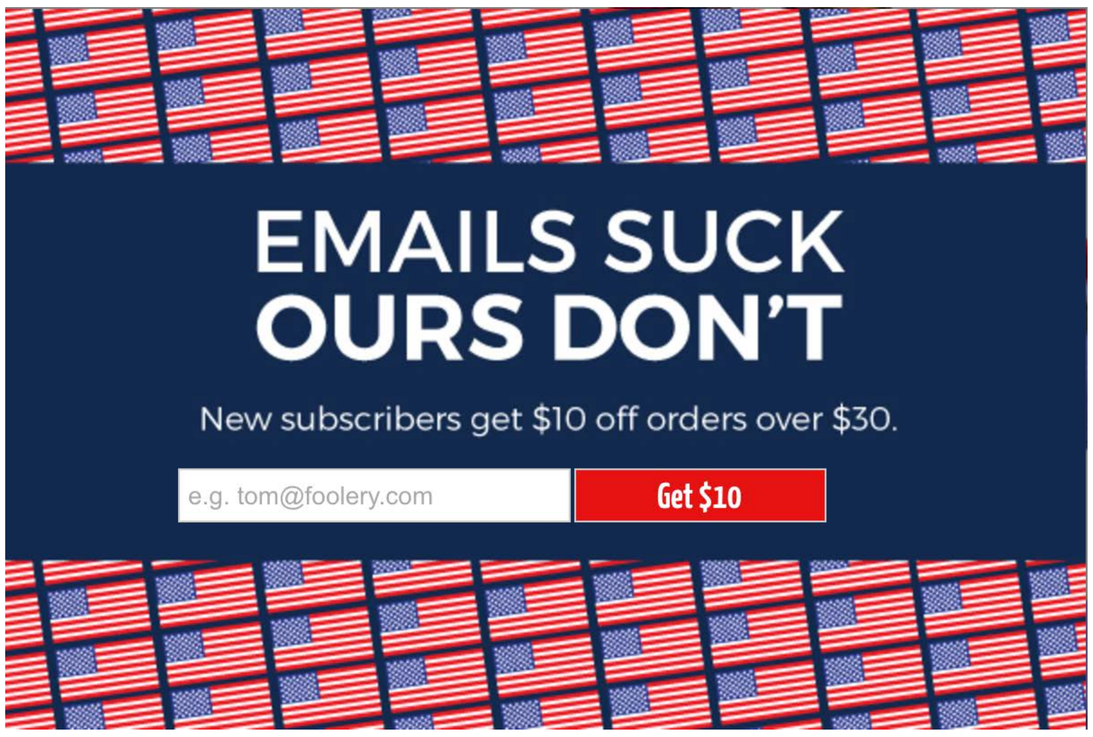
Exit Pop Ups - Sales Conversion & Cart Abandonment



It's important to engage shoppers right before they leave your site in the hopes of getting them to convert. This is especially true when the shopper is on the cart or checkout pages. To drive shoppers to purchase, present an exit pop up offering a promo code for a discount or free shipping. This is incredibly effective in driving sales from cart and checkout pages and also helps prevent cart abandonment from ever occuring.

Designing Your Promotion

The design of your promotion plays a big part in how effective it is. Generally speaking, a holiday or seasonal themed promotion will stand out and convert at a higher rate. It also shows that your business is active and up to date which establishes trust with the consumer. Here's an example for inspiration.



Common Audiences for E-Commerce Promotions

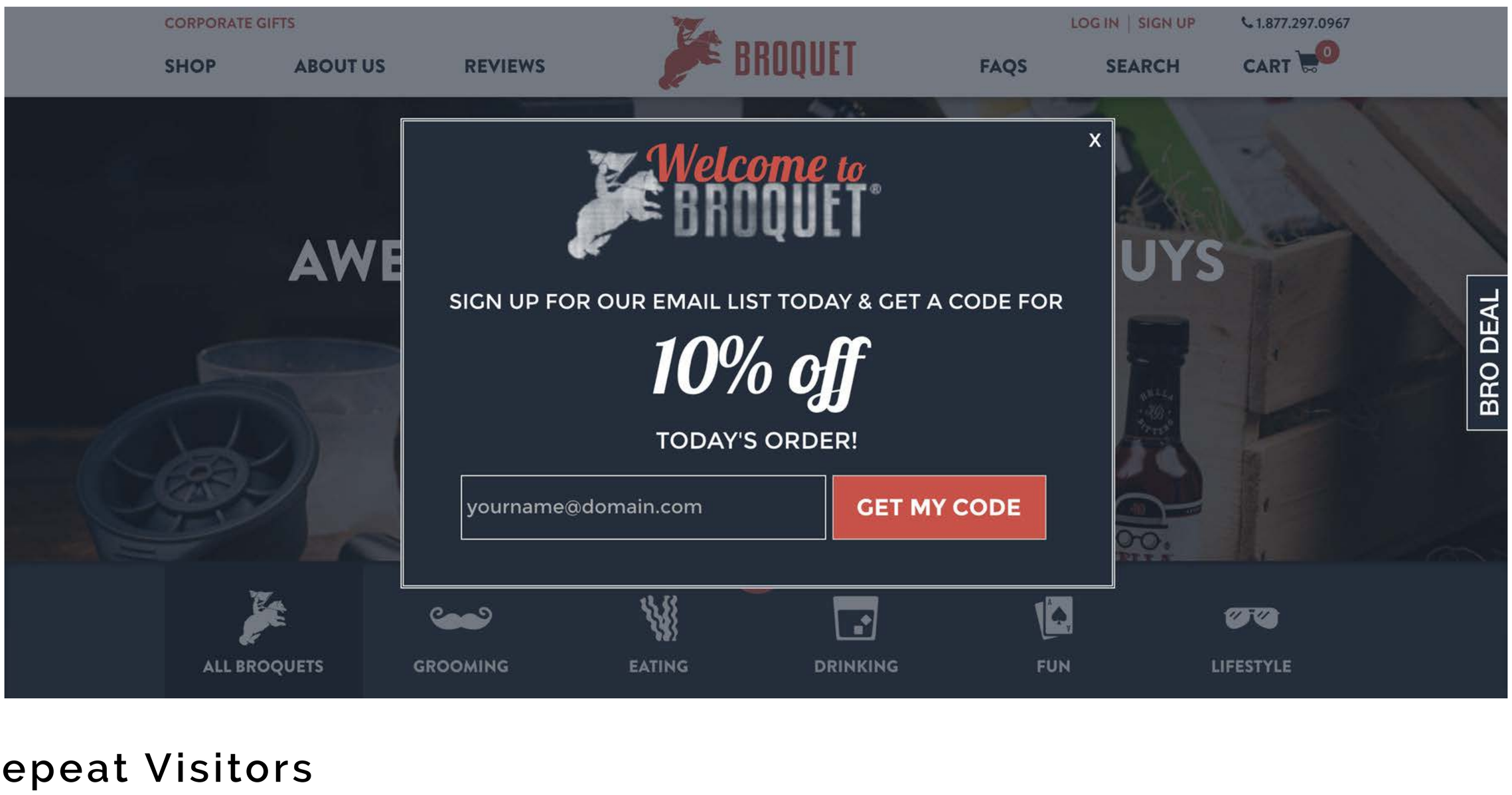
Choosing Your Audience

As mentioned earlier, you're not going to treat all traffic in the same manner. Conversion goals may be different based on where the visitors are coming from or what actions they perform on site. To help you get started and to generate some traffic segmentation ideas, here are several audiences that you can target with your promotions.

New Visitors

In order to fuel your sales funnel, you must focus on converting new visitors. It just makes sense. It doesn't matter if you're driving traffic through SEO, paid ads, social media or referrals, you must engage this audience with an enticing email pop up. This effort alone will support your traffic generation campaigns and increase marketing ROI.

Why an email pop up? 98% of new traffic will not convert into a lead or customer during their first visit. While they may return to your site in the future, there's no guarantee of this occuring. So how do you increase your chances of driving them back to your site to purchase? Acquire an email and directly market to them!



Repeat Visitors

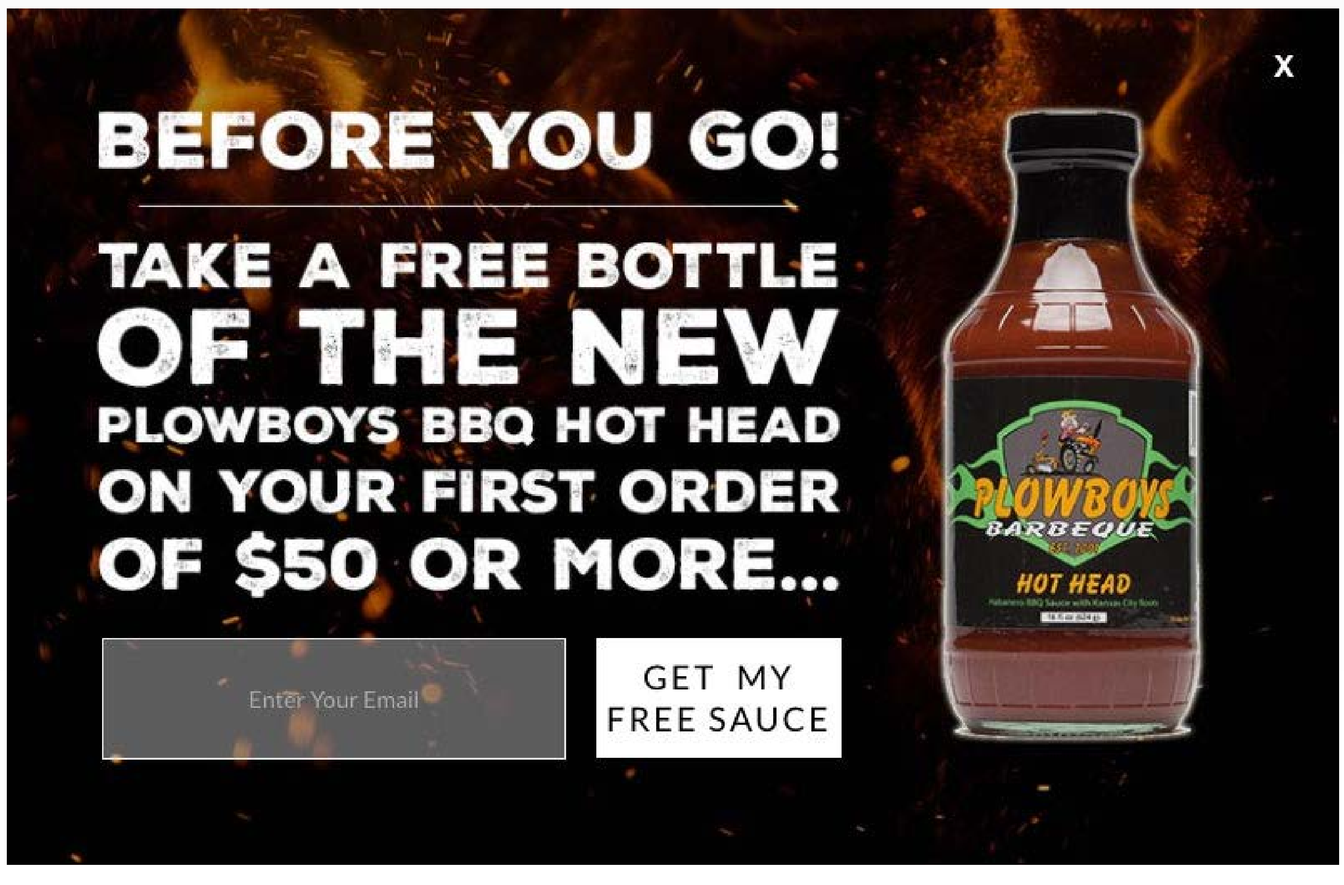
They are back on your site so they must've liked something. Many shoppers take multiple visits or marketing touches to finally complete a sale. Since these visitors have made it back to your site, you can assume that they are interested in what you offer.

This is a perfect opportunity to welcome them back to your site with a personalized message. This could be a "welcome back" offer, a CTA to a product collection, or just a helpful message with information on shipping or a current sale.

Window Shopper

The window shopper has common online practices that you can identify to deliver a personalized message at key moments during their visit. Window shoppers are either researching products, prices, and vendors OR are ready to purchase and are simply looking for the best deal possible.

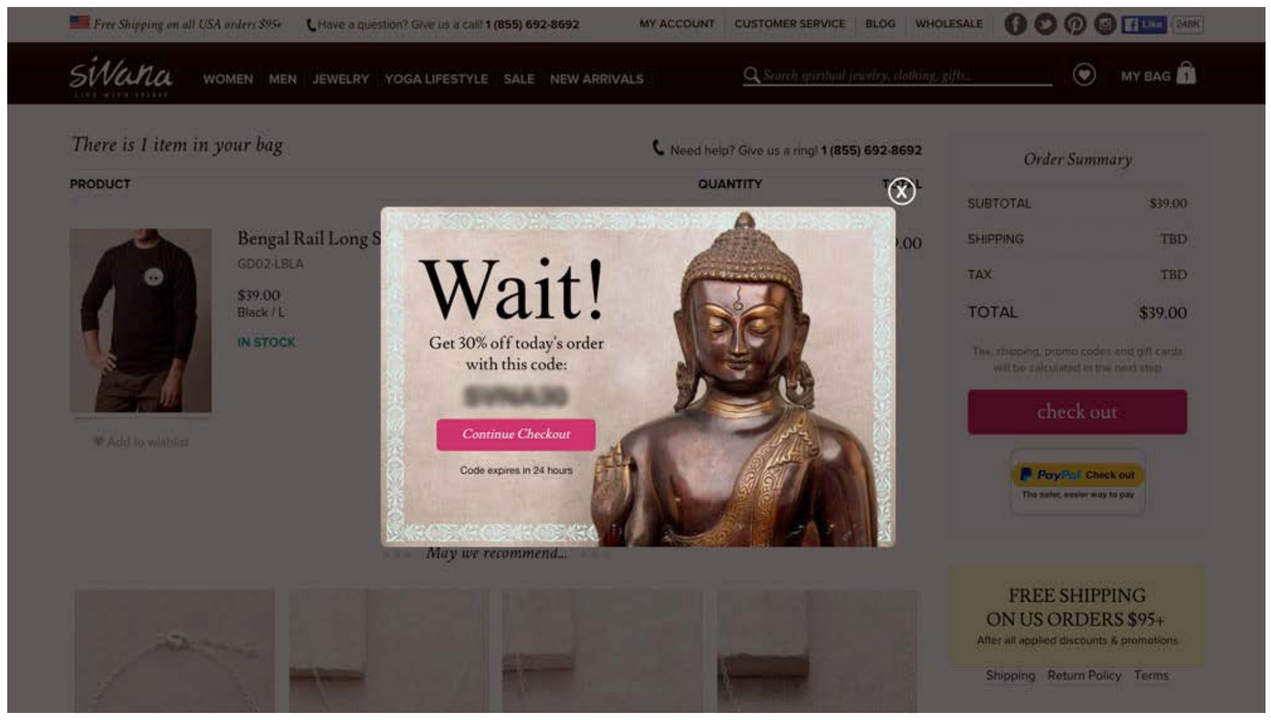
There are two behaviors that we can use to identify them as a window shopper. First, tracking page views allows us to identify this shopper as interested in our products. Second, the action of leaving to compare prices with another vendor OR find a coupon code. We never, under any circumstances, want a shopper to leave our site. The internet is too big and too distracting to risk it.



Present an exit pop up to window shoppers with an offer inviting them to stay and complete their purchase. This could be free shipping, a discount, a gift with purchase, or another enticing incentive.

Cart Abandoners

Every online retailer has to deal with cart abandonment and there are a lot of great strategies for driving cart abandoners back to complete a purchase. However, the moment a shopper leaves your site, you lose control of potentially closing that sale. And if the visitor is on a cart or checkout page, they are so close to purchasing. Don't just let them leave.



Prevent cart abandonment from occurring by presenting an unlocked exit offer to shoppers who attempt to leave the cart or checkout pages & provide an incentive to purchase (free shipping, small discount, etc.) This keeps the shopper on your site & fulfills their needs without having to price shop or coupon hunt (two major causes of cart abandonment).

Notes on Major Traffic Sources

A simple segmentation technique is engaging visitors with pop ups or promotions based on what traffic source they come from. Here are a few major traffic sources that you'll most likely be dealing with.

Note: Please See the important note on mobile visitors below. This specifically applies to mobile search traffic

Email

It's bad marketing practice and unnecessary to ask a current email subscriber to subscribe to your emails. Instead, present a different offer or pop up to visitors who click through from an email.

Google Organic Traffic

Organic traffic is awesome! These visitors found your site based on relevant search terms so they're most likely interested. Aim to capture their email with a contest or another email list growth promotion.

Facebook

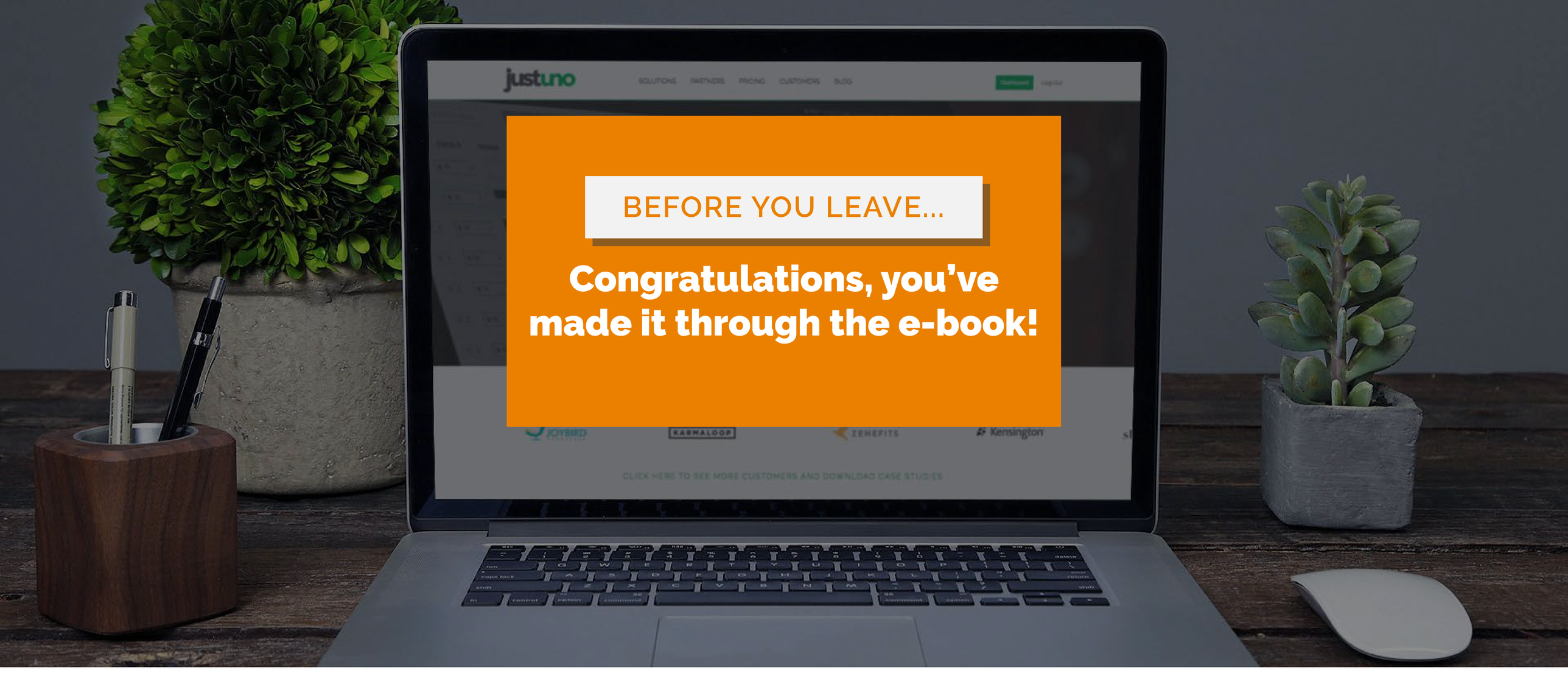
If you're investing in Facebook ads, you should engage this traffic with some sort of promotion with the goal of increasing conversion rates for this channel. Higher conversion rate = Higher ROI from Facebook ads. You can even target visitors based on specific ad campaigns!

An Important Note on Mobile Visitors

Mobile traffic is different and therefore should be treated differently. It's this exact reason why Justuno has both desktop and mobile promotions because design and targeting will differ.

In addition to this, Google has recently updated their policies regarding mobile pop ups. In short, Google does not want you to present a pop up to visitors immediately after they click through from a Google search result. Besides that restriction, you are free to use mobile pop ups on your website!

Here's an article that provides a full breakdown of Google's policy update and best practices for mobile pop ups.



Now it's time to get going on your next holiday or seasonal promotion. Here's a quick checklist to recap the process covered in the e-book.

- ☑ Choose an upcoming promotional opportunity (View calendar)
- ☑ Determine what your goals are for this promotion
- ☑ Choose a type of promotion based on your goals
- ☑ Design your promotion to fit the season or holiday
- ☑ Select the audience(s) for the promotion
- ☑ Connect your email marketing/CRM platform (recommended)

LOG IN TO YOUR JUSTUNO ACCOUNT TO GET STARTED!

Don't have a Justuno account yet? No problem!

Gain access to the entire platform with a free 14 day trial!

No commitments, Just conversions!

START YOUR FREE TRIAL