

FOURSQUARE

2025 Holiday Guide for Retail Marketers

'Tis the season for smarter ad spend—powered by real-world trends and solutions that drive ROI and campaign success.

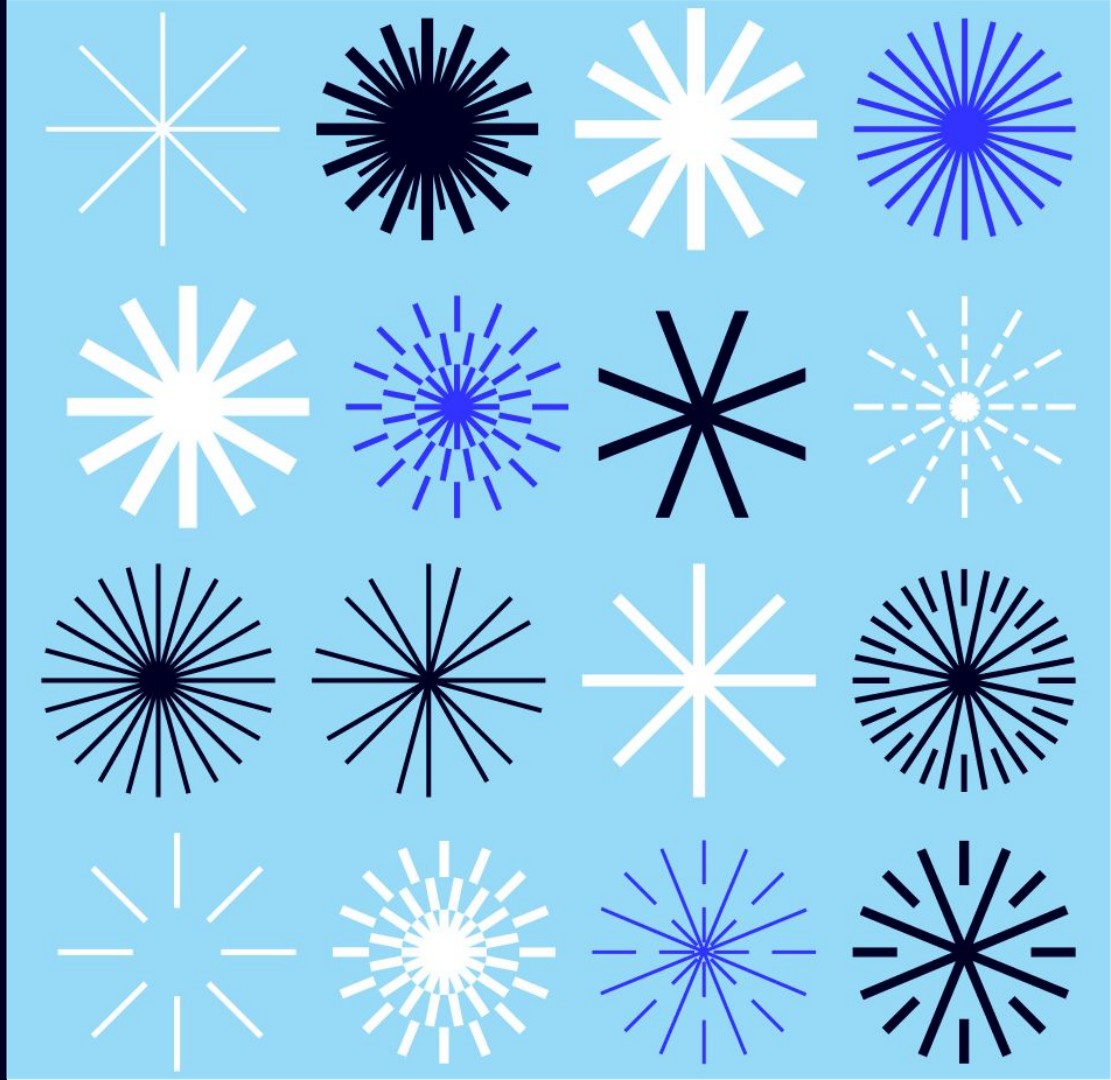


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Introduction

Why is location-based advertising crucial for 2025 holiday retail campaigns?

With rising economic uncertainty impacting consumer behavior, marketers are under pressure to make every dollar count. Location-based advertising helps marketers connect with high-intent audiences during the holiday shopping season, optimize ad spend, and drive meaningful engagement, whether capturing early shoppers or influencing last-minute buyers.

In this guide, we'll break down:

- Key trends shaping holiday shopping behavior
- Real-world use cases, case studies, and campaign tips to maximize holiday performance
- How Foursquare solutions can help your holiday campaigns drive greater ROI

Dive in to see how location data can help your holiday campaigns shine this season and beyond.



90%

Of marketers saw higher sales with location-based marketing.



20%

Increase in in-store conversions was driven by location-based ads, bridging online engagement to real-world visits.



77%

Of 2024 holiday spending happened in-store.

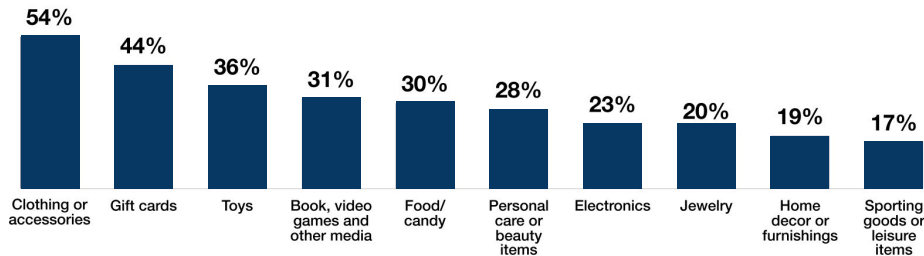
01

Holiday Shopping Trends



What to Expect for Holiday Spend & Gifting in 2025

Marketers should expect strong in-store traffic around key gifting moments, focusing on categories that drove the highest spend and traffic in 2024:



Source: Top Gifting Categories in 2024 ([NRF](#))

Toy Stores led foot traffic growth from October to November 2024 (**26%**), followed by **Fashion Retail (+23%)**, **Cosmetic Stores (+21%)**, and **Gift Stores (+19%)**.

In December vs November, momentum held with **Toy Stores (+43%)**, **Department Stores (+39%)**, **Cosmetic Stores (+37%)**, and **Fashion Retail** and **Sporting Goods (+36%)**. **Computer & Electronics** and **Big Box Stores** saw smaller gains of **+15%** and **+20%**, respectively.

Source: Foursquare



Projections indicate that by 2030, winter holiday spending will total **\$1.22 trillion**.

Source: [Capital One](#)



Holiday retail sales are expected to grow **2.7-3.7%** in 2025 over 2024, though high tariffs may soften demand in discretionary segments making every ad dollar even more important.

Source: [Mintel](#)



Gift Stores and Bookstores saw a **~35%** increase in visits in December 2024 compared to November 2024.

Source: Foursquare



During Black Friday week, outlet mall visits were **61%** higher than shopping malls (vs. the prior week). In contrast, the two weeks leading up to Christmas saw just a **2.5%** difference, showing less shopper preference later in the season.

Source: Foursquare

In-Store & Online Holiday Shopping Preferences

In-store shopping remains the preferred method, but online is growing making a hybrid strategy powered by real-world behavior essential:

Total visits to retailers by week from April 2024 - April 2025

Shoppers are starting earlier, but the final days still matter most as in-store foot traffic peaks just before Christmas



Source: Foursquare

The season starts early...and ends late

60%

Of consumers will begin their holiday shopping before Thanksgiving. ([Aureate](#))

197M

U.S. shoppers made a purchase during Cyber Week, with most of the sales being in-store. ([Datacap](#))

+25%

Rise in January conversions compared to previous years. ([Microsoft](#))

Omnichannel experience is non-negotiable



Mobile holiday ecommerce is poised for **13.4% growth**, reaching \$140.6 billion in 2024. ([Emarketer](#))



In-store shopping still earns more sales dollars than online shopping. With \$5.927 trillion in retail stores and \$1.337 trillion online in 2024. ([Capital One Shopping](#))



74% of shoppers plan to shop both online and in-store. ([MMR](#))

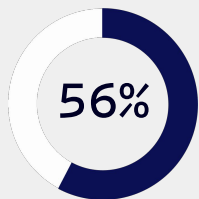


Last-minute shoppers tend to shop more in-store than online. ([Forbes](#))

How Generational & Market Forces Influence Shopping Behavior

Consumers are more cautious with spending due to inflation and tariffs, while social media and generational differences continue to drive how, where, and why people shop. To stay relevant, marketers must consider price sensitivity, platform influence, and personalization across age groups.

Age will shape the path to purchase



of younger shoppers prioritize reducing packaging waste, showing sustainability matters. ([Moosend](#))

Interestingly, **Gen Z**, despite being digital natives, is more likely to shop and buy in-store than **Millennials** and **Gen X**, and nearly on par with **Boomers**. ([SGB Media](#))

Over **80% of Boomers** research online, using search engines and retailer websites, before visiting a store. ([Salesfloor](#))

Shoppers will spend with caution



[43% of consumers](#) listed raising prices and inflation as a top concern, followed by 29% concerned about tariffs.



More than [60%](#) of consumers have either changed or expected to change their spending habits because of tariffs.



[Baby boomers](#) are the least likely group to splurge while Millennials are most likely to spend more.

Social media is powerful

89%

of consumers say social media influences their holiday shopping. ([Sprout Social](#))

65%

of consumers use social platforms to find or buy holiday gifts, and **87% of Gen Z** get shopping ideas there. ([Keywords Everywhere](#))

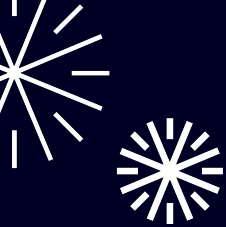
92%

of Millennials use smartphones frequently for social apps, with **89% consuming video content**, making video a key format to reach them. ([Salesfloor](#))

02

Use Cases & Foursquare Solutions





Marketers Use Cases

Connect with Holiday Shoppers &
Measure Campaign Performance



Competitively conquest shoppers that recently visited or are currently at competitive store locations to win holiday spend.



Win back lapsed customers that previously visited your retail stores with tailored holiday messaging to encourage revisits.



Influence path to purchase by targeting holiday shoppers as they engage in activities that they tend to do before visiting your store.



Retarget shoppers across mobile, CTV, and social, as well as those who have previously visited your stores.



Prove incremental sales during holiday promotional peaks.



Optimize omnichannel performance by measuring results across digital, CTV, social, OOH, and influencers to understand which channel combinations drive the highest return.



Maximize last-minute campaign results using in-flight attribution to adjust spend during the final holiday stretch in December.



Evaluate creative performance by A/B testing holiday-themed creatives and attribute which drives more visits or sales.



Smarter Targeting & Better Measurement



Improve Your Return on Ad Spend

With better targeting, you can reach holiday shoppers who are more likely to engage with your ads and make a purchase.




Understand What's Working

A clear view into which holiday campaign tactics drive store visits and sales will help you allocate your ad budget more efficiently.



Maximize ROI

Precise targeting and accurate measurement are the gifts that keep on giving, helping you craft smarter holiday campaigns that drive results.



Holiday-Ready Location-Based Advertising Solutions:

Retailers use Foursquare's suite of marketing solutions to improve targeting and gain insights that allow them to optimize their holiday campaigns.



Foursquare Audience

Target shoppers on the nice list. Build custom audience segments based on real-world holiday shopping behaviors to drive festive results.



Foursquare Proximity

Capture shoppers in the holiday moment. Create custom geofences to connect with consumers in real time, without any PII data sharing required.



Foursquare Attribution

Unwrap what's working. Measure the impact of your holiday campaigns on in-store visits and sales to optimize strategies before the season ends.



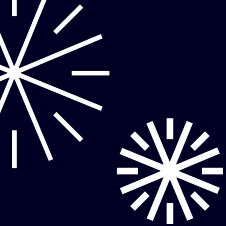
Sales Impact Attribution

Measure holiday ad-driven sales and understand the customer journey when combining with visitation reports.

03

Targeting & Measurement Strategies During The Holidays





When Planning A Successful Holiday Campaign

FSQ

Ask yourself:



What is the **optimal frequency** we should reach our audience during the holiday season?



What is the **optimal allocation of budget** for each channel? How are our channels working together?



What **audience segments** should we build to reach early holiday shoppers vs. last-minute buyers?



How will the metrics we care about **impact planning** and **optimizations** during the high season?



What audiences are **responding the most** to our advertising efforts? How can we better reach them?



How do we reach shoppers who are **planning major gift purchases**? What about **budget-conscious** buyers?



What **offline behaviors** indicate someone is in the market for our products right now?



What **metrics** do we care about the most to drive more sales during the holiday shopping season?

Holiday Targeting Strategies for Retailers

Engage your ideal holiday shoppers by using real-world visitation behaviors which indicate what they're likely in the market for.

Holiday Host Entertainers who visit party supply and grocery stores the weeks leading up to key Q4 holidays. Reach them in real-time to influence brand preference.

Black Friday and Cyber Monday Shoppers seen shopping during this time last year at shopping centers, malls, big box stores, department stores, and other major retailers.

Value-Conscious Shoppers who have recently been seen visiting discount retailers, outlet malls, or dollar stores to stretch their budgets.

Luxury Retail Loyalists who continue to be seen visiting designer boutiques, high-end malls, or flagship retail locations, indicating affluent spending habits.

Winter Travelers seen at airports and rest stops throughout winter, but not other times of the year.

Online Shoppers who are rarely seen at retail locations, indicating they likely shop online. Filter by age to better personalize your campaigns.

Mall Crawlers while they are browsing at malls during the month of December, using Proximity to reach them in real-time as they decide what gifts to buy for the holiday season.

Last-Minute Gift Shoppers seen at gift stores, department stores, or malls during the week leading up to winter holidays.

Weekday Shoppers who do most of their shopping during the week and are rarely seen at retailers on the weekends.

Lapsed Holiday Customers who visited your stores last holiday season, but haven't been seen at a high frequency visiting your stores the rest of the year.

Repeat Visitors who consistently return to your brand's locations, or your competitors' stores, suggesting stable brand preference.

Morning or Evening Retail Shoppers who shop in the late morning hours from 9am-12pm or evening hours from 6-9pm.

Best Practices

- Estimated audience size should be greater than 50K, ideally 1M+.
- Increase the scale of your campaign by using the Reach Multiplier feature to create a lookalike audience.
- Use over 1500+ ready-to-use audience segments for quick activation off-the-shelf in major DSPs.
- Play with "AND" and "OR" filters to adjust scale and narrow down your audiences.

How to get started?

Use the self-serve Targeting Designer to build custom segments on the fly, search for Foursquare segments in your DSP to activate ready-to-use holiday audiences in seconds, or tap into our team of location experts who will help you build custom segments to reach campaign goals.

Get in touch [here](#).

Holiday Targeting Strategies for Retailers



Get more **Q4 location-based targeting** segment ideas

[Learn more](#)

Bookstore Enthusiasts frequently seen at bookstores before holidays or year-round to reach gift givers or book-worms.

Gen-Z Clothing Shoppers seen at apparel retailers and department stores, especially during seasonal sale periods. Filter by frequency to target brand-loyal or prospective shoppers.

Early Toy Scouts who visit toy retailers like LEGO, Build-A-Bear, or Disney Store during summer months, suggesting holiday shopping for kids has already begun.

Electronics Shoppers seen at electronics and tech retailers like Best Buy, Sony, InMotion Entertainment, Brookstone, Fry's Electronics, etc. during holiday deal cycles.

Luxury Jewelry & Watch Gift Givers seen at high-end jewelry and watch retailers prior to holidays throughout the year, indicating they'll likely repeat similar behavior again.

High Income Travelers who have a HHI of \$150k+ and have been frequently seen at airports during the holiday season.

Christmas Tree Shoppers seen visiting tree farms last year, signaling they will likely buy one this year.

Experience Buyers who frequently visit entertainment venues (like zoos, aquariums, and theme parks), likely purchasing or planning experiential gifts for the holidays.

Active & Outdoor Enthusiasts frequently seen at sporting goods stores and outdoor retailers. Filter by age and frequency to align with back-to-school, winter sports, or holiday fitness trends.

Home Improvement Consumers seen at mattress stores and home decor locations like IKEA, West Elm, Ashley Furniture Homestore, Bob's Discount Furniture, etc. in the past 1-3 months.

Beauty Deal Shoppers seen at retailers like Sephora, ULTA, and Sally Beauty during holiday sales, but not year-round, indicating they're motivated by seasonal deals.

In-Market Auto Shoppers who have been recently seen visiting car dealerships in the past month, indicating they may be looking for holiday deals on automobiles, or those frequently seen at maintenance shops signaling they may be in the market soon.

Did you know that?

Bookstores saw the largest jump in visits among retailer categories with over 25M visits, seeing a



increase in visits the week leading up to Christmas vs. the prior week.

Source: Foursquare

New Year's Party Hosts who visited liquor stores, grocery chains, and party supply stores between Christmas and New Year's Eve last year. Reach them in real time to influence event purchases and celebrations.

Sustainability Activists frequently seen at thrift stores, farmer's markets, recycling centers, and other eco-friendly businesses.

✓ Optimization Dos

Focus on a few smart adjustments at a time

Holiday campaigns move fast. Prioritize tactical, high-impact changes instead of overhauls.

Optimize toward tactics with strong confidence levels (95%+)

Use data to guide your budget decisions, especially when every dollar counts.

Give it time...but not too much

Holiday attribution reports start showing impact ~2 weeks post-launch. Use early directional signals to act fast.

Shift budgets gradually

Avoid drastic reallocations. Incremental shifts let you test and learn without losing momentum during peak shopping days.

If lift is absent or low

Find high performing areas to optimize towards those other KPIs during higher visitation shopping days.

✗ Optimization Don'ts

Don't skip clear goal-setting

Going into the holiday season without well-defined KPIs will derail optimization.

Don't ignore the full customer journey

Holiday shopping is nonlinear. Multi-touch attribution is key to understanding where to invest.

Don't optimize to vanity metrics

Impressions or clicks don't equal revenue. Stick to KPIs that directly reflect performance (e.g., incremental sales or visits).

Don't delay real-time adjustments

A week of underperformance during the holidays can be impactful. Act early when data shows clear behavior shifts.

Don't trust poor-quality data sources

Holiday media spend is too valuable to waste. Only act on results from proven and trusted measurement partners.

Your Holiday Checklist



Plan early for better optimization

Launch campaigns before peak dates to gather early insights. Optimize creatives and bids *before* holiday spikes.



Don't assume consumers will pay full price

With tariffs top-of-mind, value-driven messaging outperforms other positioning for most categories.



Test creative variations with urgency

Highlight “last chance,” “limited stock,” or “fast-shipping” messages, and rotate frequently to avoid ad fatigue.



Use real-time signals & try new audiences

Leverage in-flight reporting to adjust spend and test tactics based on foot traffic, sales, and key holiday shopping windows.



Stay agile and creative in your targeting strategy

Think outside the box on what behaviors could indicate shoppers may be interested in your offering, beyond just visits to your store.



Segment by shopping mission

Build audiences for gift givers, last-minute buyers, or deal seekers based on real-world behaviors to tailor messaging accordingly.



Meet shoppers where they already are

Activate proximity targeting near malls and high-traffic retail zones to catch consumers while they're in a buying mindset.



Align targeting with store inventory and promotions

Deploy targeting segments where specific SKUs are in stock, activations/events, or holiday discounts are live to drive qualified foot traffic, especially in the prime shopping weeks.

04

Case Studies



Digilant & **FSQ Proximity** & **Audience** Drive Superior Results for Luminox

Challenge

Increase brand awareness of Luminox to four partner retailers. The primary KPI was driving traffic to the retailer's e-commerce site, but view-through and conversions on the Luminox site were also measured.

Solution

Digilant leveraged **FSQ Proximity** to target users in real time at Nordstrom, Cabellas, Dillards, and Tourneau using tailored, co-branded creative. **FSQ Audience** was added to retarget users within 30 days of visiting those stores.

This campaign drove a **25% higher CTR** versus all other campaign tactics, and a **44% higher engagement** compared to other tactics. It was accountable for **10% of all view-throughs** to the Luminox site and in-app inventory performed **155% better** than all other inventory.

FSQ



44%

Higher engagement
compared to other
tactics



25%

Higher CTR
compared to other
tactics

Unlocking the Power of **Sales Impact** for Retailers

Challenge

A retailer sought to measure the impact of its advertising efforts beyond foot traffic and gain deeper insights into customer behaviors to monitor additional key performance indicators.

Solution

Its agency partnered with Foursquare to test **Sales Impact**, an add-on **Attribution** feature to assess channel, partner, and tactic effectiveness on driving both store visits and sales.

By incorporating **Sales Impact**, the retailer aimed to get a better understanding of the customer journey, and utilize these new metrics to make better business decisions.



The Results

2.04%

Visit lift

\$1.30

Transaction
Lift

21%

Sales Lift

Foursquare Attribution Sales Impact feature provided a comprehensive view of campaign effectiveness by measuring success across multiple channels, partners, and tactics. Key performance indicators (KPIs) such as visit lift, sales lift, and incremental ROAS were analyzed to determine which strategies best converted browsers into shoppers.

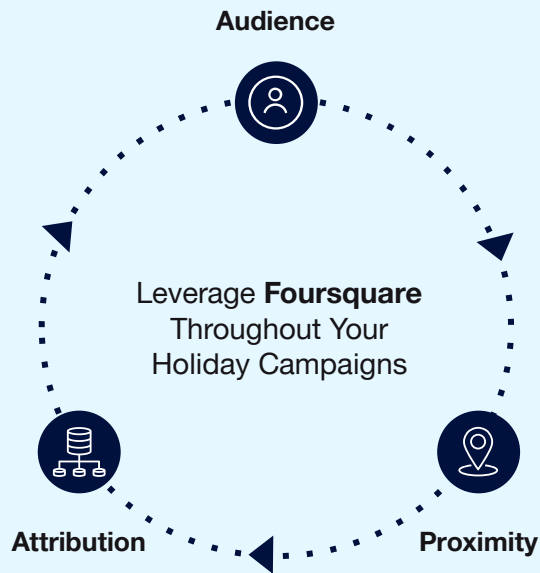
05

Why Retailers Partner with Foursquare



#1 Leader in Location Intelligence

Named by CBInsights



FSQ



Quality

With a database of **over 100M POI** — spanning gift stores and toy stores to airports and shopping malls — we understand places and the movement between them.



Flexibility

We offer retailers unmatched partnerships with a global reach of **550+ integrations** across channels. Our data is readily accessible via your preferred partners, just in time for the busiest season.



Expertise

With **15+ years** of experience, we've perfected our location technology to deliver both scale and accuracy in targeting and measurement to make every holiday ad dollar count.



Privacy

We're committed to **protecting** consumer **privacy** and do so by giving consumers control over their data, removing sensitive locations, and holding our partners accountable.

Activate **Everywhere** You Buy Media

Our solutions are available to activate anywhere you buy. We're plugged into the platforms where your customers shop: DSPs, DMPs, social, CTV, out-of-home, and retail media networks. Your platforms are our partners.

All leading DMP's



All leading DSP's



Display & Video 360



Leading Publishers



Leading Social Media



Tik Tok

Leading CTV & OOH



06

Conclusion



Make Every **Holiday** Moment Count


With the 2025 holiday season fast approaching, marketers face increased pressure to deliver results as shoppers become more budget-conscious. Investing in efficient and effective marketing strategies is essential.

Location-based advertising helps you better understand your customers, connect with them in ideal moments, and influence their decisions. With in-store shopping continuing to dominate holiday spend, leading retailers are leaning into solutions grounded in real-world behavior—both online and offline.

Foursquare's Targeting and Attribution solutions help you connect with high-intent shoppers, optimize campaigns mid-flight, and maximize your return on ad spend across every channel.

Join the hundreds of other companies using Foursquare to drive real results. We're here to help you this holiday season!





Unwrap real results this holiday season.
Get in touch with Foursquare today.

foursquare.com

