

**KOWABUNGA!**

**SPECIAL REPORT**



**QUICK HOLIDAY TIPS & STRATEGIES  
FOR ONLINE MERCHANTS**



## Quick Holiday Tips & Strategies for Online Merchants

**IF YOU'RE AN ONLINE MERCHANT, WE DON'T HAVE TO CONVINCE YOU THAT THE HOLIDAY SHOPPING SEASON MEANS A LOT TO YOUR YEARLY SALES. YOU KNOW IT, WE KNOW IT AND YOUR ACCOUNTANT KNOWS IT. WELL, AT LEAST WE HOPE YOU DO!**



Need proof that holiday shopping is a big deal, the numbers don't lie:

- Forrester Research predicts online holiday sales will grow to \$13.2 billion in 2004
- Shop.org says that 32% of consumers plan to do more of their holiday shopping online this year

The following information is written for you, MyAP powered customers and non-customers (we love to share). It's filled with quick, easy-to-implement and helpful strategies for your online store.

We wish you much success this holiday season, and a very happy new year. It's all part of the KowaBunga! Difference, and another reason to Switch To MyAP.

Sincerely,

The KowaBunga! Staff

*P.S. Check out the last page of this document, featuring tips directly from MyAP customer MP3Dollars.com*



**39% of  
holiday  
purchases  
were influ-  
enced by free  
shipping deals**

**BIZRATE.COM**

## #1 Quick Tip: Shipping

Do not underestimate the way shoppers think about shipping. Not only are they looking for lower-cost shipping, they also need to be sure that their package is going to arrive on time, especially during the holiday season. Here are some quick things you can do to make sure the message is delivered:

**Show Shipping Deadlines** - Make sure you post clear holiday shipping deadlines in prominent locations on your site, and not just in the shopping cart area. Also, include cut-off dates for those last-minute shoppers.

**Tip:** Create a special holiday shipping graphic to place on every page of your site. When clicked, it can direct customers to a special page outlining all of your holiday shipping details. You could even use a JavaScript that counts down the “days left to guarantee shipping”.

**Shipping Discounts** - If possible, find a way to cut your shipping costs. In 2003, BizRate.com found that 39 percent of holiday online purchases were influenced by free shipping deals. This could quite possibly work as the extra push you needed to beat out your competition and push more volume into your holiday sales.

**Tip:** Check out your competition and at least find a way to match their shipping offer, if not beat it.

**Christmas Isn't The Only Holiday** - Hanukkah, Thanksgiving and Kwanzaa are other important days that you'll want to consider.

**Tip:** Use these dates to trigger special promotions on your website and to your email subscribers. Match certain products to each holiday for an extra boost in sales.



Some people  
**prefer**  
to pick out  
their own gifts...gift  
certificates are the  
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## #2 Quick Tip: Gift Certificates/Cards

Some people prefer to pick out their own gifts, which makes a gift certificate or gift card the perfect choice. If you're not offering this as an option on your website, you may be missing out on some sales. The biggest problem most online merchants face is how to get gift certificates on your site. Here are a few answers:

**Your Shopping Cart** - Check with your shopping cart provider to see what they offer. Most of them offer you the ability to create gift certificates for sale on your site.

For example, if you use Monster Commerce, you can create a new "product" in a category called gift certificates. Then, a shopper can simply purchase the certificate and is presented with a special PIN number to give to the person receiving the gift. When that person goes to check out, all they need to do is provide that special PIN number.

**Tip:** Create a special category in your product database called "Gift Certificates". Offer as many possible monetary breakdowns as possible (\$25, \$50, \$100, etc...). The more choices available the better.

**Corporate Gifts Cards** - The next step in offering gift cards. If you want to get serious about offering gift cards, you'll want to work directly with your bank or credit card provider to have custom cards made for sale on your website.

**Tip:** What's great about these types of cards is you can customize them with your own brand logo.



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### #3 Quick Tip: Gift Ideas

Let's face it, some people hate shopping, even online where it's quick and easy. Some shoppers also don't like to have to search around for gift ideas. The point is, make it easy and your profits should soar! Here's a few ideas on that:

**Make It Stand Out, While Fitting In** - You don't have to redesign your entire site, instead, find a way to fit the additional information in. First, add a completely new section on your site dedicated to gift ideas. Then, if possible, add an additional navigation graphic in your main navigation directing shoppers to that section.

**Tip:** Make the graphic stand out by using a holiday theme. For example, make the button red and green with a snowflake on it. Be creative.

**Integrate Ideas Into Search Results** - Your shopper doesn't know what a good gift idea is until you tell them. When a shopper searches for an item, it's your job to say, "Hey, this is a great gift idea!". There's no better place to do that after a shopper searches for a product on your site. Try putting a link to your new gift ideas section at the top of your search results pages.

**Tip:** Be proactive. Tell the shopper why your product makes a good gift. Explain yourself as much as you can.

**Organize Gifts By Categories** - Your shopper knows who they need to buy for, just not what they want to buy. That's why it's important to put your gift ideas into categories.

**Tip:** Think about your customers. Who are they? Do you sell products for women? You may want to include a category for "Gifts for Your Wife or Girlfriend" for male shoppers. Or if you sell electronics, you could have a category called "Gifts Your Man Must Have".



# The key to selling to last-minute shoppers is to make it easy & fast

## #4 Quick Tip: Last Minute Gifts

We've all done it, you know, waiting till the last minute to go out and find a gift you didn't have time to shop for earlier. The key to getting the sale from last minute shoppers is to make it easy and fast. Your shopper needs to feel like you've saved them. To do that, you need to be very clear that you CAN deliver what they need, in a specific time.

**Timing Is Everything** - Create a last minute shopper page that reassures the shopper that they will receive their items by a certain date. The goal is to make them feel comfortable that you have solved their problem.

**Tip:** Use an html chart format that shows specific dates. For example, "if ordered by this date, delivery is promised by this date".

**Days Left Before Guaranteed Shipping** - This is similar to the earlier tip about adding a JavaScript for "days until Christmas". Instead, or in addition to doing that, figure out your absolute last day that orders can take place to guarantee shipping, then display that countdown on your site. This will prompt last minute shoppers into taking action.

**Tip:** Try making this number stand out to draw attention. Sometimes blinking works to draw the eye of a shopper. Don't overdo it though.

## #5 Quick Tip: Holiday Specials

We don't have to tell you that specials work. Shoppers are naturally attracted to items that make them feel like they are "getting a deal". As an online merchant, you should already have a special page on your site, if not, now's the time to make one. To create a holiday specials page, you can either simply turn your existing specials page into a holiday specials page, or create an entirely new page.

## Straight From Our Customer's Mouths, Tips & Tricks

### MyAP Customer: [MP3Dollars.com](http://MP3Dollars.com)

Want to increase holiday sales? Here is a simple way to ensure that you make the most of the holidays with your sites sales.

Eight to ten weeks before the holiday (NOW) start running exit panels and in-site surveys that help you determine interest levels of your traffic. This can be as simple as a text based page listing 20 products that are horizontal to your own and also would make great gifts. Use it as an exit pop or a survey on your site.



Once you identify these cross interests, you can then hone your sales strategy to include these items as cross sells, on thank-you pages or post-sale specials to be run in autoresponders and e-mail that they request or receive from you.

I might also suggest, self-serving as it might be, that music be a part of your holiday sales strategy. Because music is universally enjoyed, it makes good sense to offer your traffic the tools to get all the holiday music and movies they want for free.

Beyond being able to get holiday music and movies, a lot of MP3 and portable DVD Players will be sold this holiday season, and all those recipients are going to need a place to fill up their iPods at. MP3Dollars.com can help you, help them.

Our popular subscription service teaches users the ins-and-outs of using file sharing software, as well as all the other media components that users have installed on the computers and other devices that they have no idea how to enjoy. We sort it out so they don't have to. You get the commission for helping them to get more out of their gifts and purchases. Now that should warm the cockles of your bank account this Holiday.

Happy Selling,

Jim Lillig, Affiliate Marketing Manager, [MP3Dollars.com](http://MP3Dollars.com)