20 YEARS

RPE ORIGIN

LEVERAGING **DATA** & **TECHNOLOGY** FOR YOUR

HOLIDAY EMAIL

PROGRAM

The holiday season is critical for many enterprise companies, especially B2C and ecommerce companies. Customer expectations are high, their inboxes are flooded with emails, and they want their items delivered yesterday. With massive revenue on the line, enterprise email marketers need smarter strategies to cut through the noise and get results.

THE GOOD NEWS?

Leveraging data and technology in your holiday email program can create personalized, high-impact holiday campaigns that deliver results for Q4 and help build smarter email marketing strategies for the year ahead. It all starts with building a solid foundation for a strategic approach to personalization, measurement, and beyond.

PART 1

CREATE A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR HOLIDAY CAMPAIGNS

The holiday season is a make-or-break moment for many brands, and you need a solid foundation well before the holiday season hits. That means setting your strategy and identifying your data and technology needs so you can deliver personalized experiences at scale and drive measurable impact.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Before segmenting, personalizing, or automating a single message, it's essential to understand who your audience really is. That means going beyond basic demographics and past purchase data to understand their behavior, preferences, and lifecycle stage. The holiday season intensifies competition for customer attention, so your ability to meet customers with relevant content in the right moment depends on how well you know them.

Start with a customer-centric mindset to better understand who's browsing, who's buying, and who shops early versus late. For enterprise companies, this isn't a one-time exercise to create audience personas, but rather an ongoing curiosity about your customer and what drives their behavior.
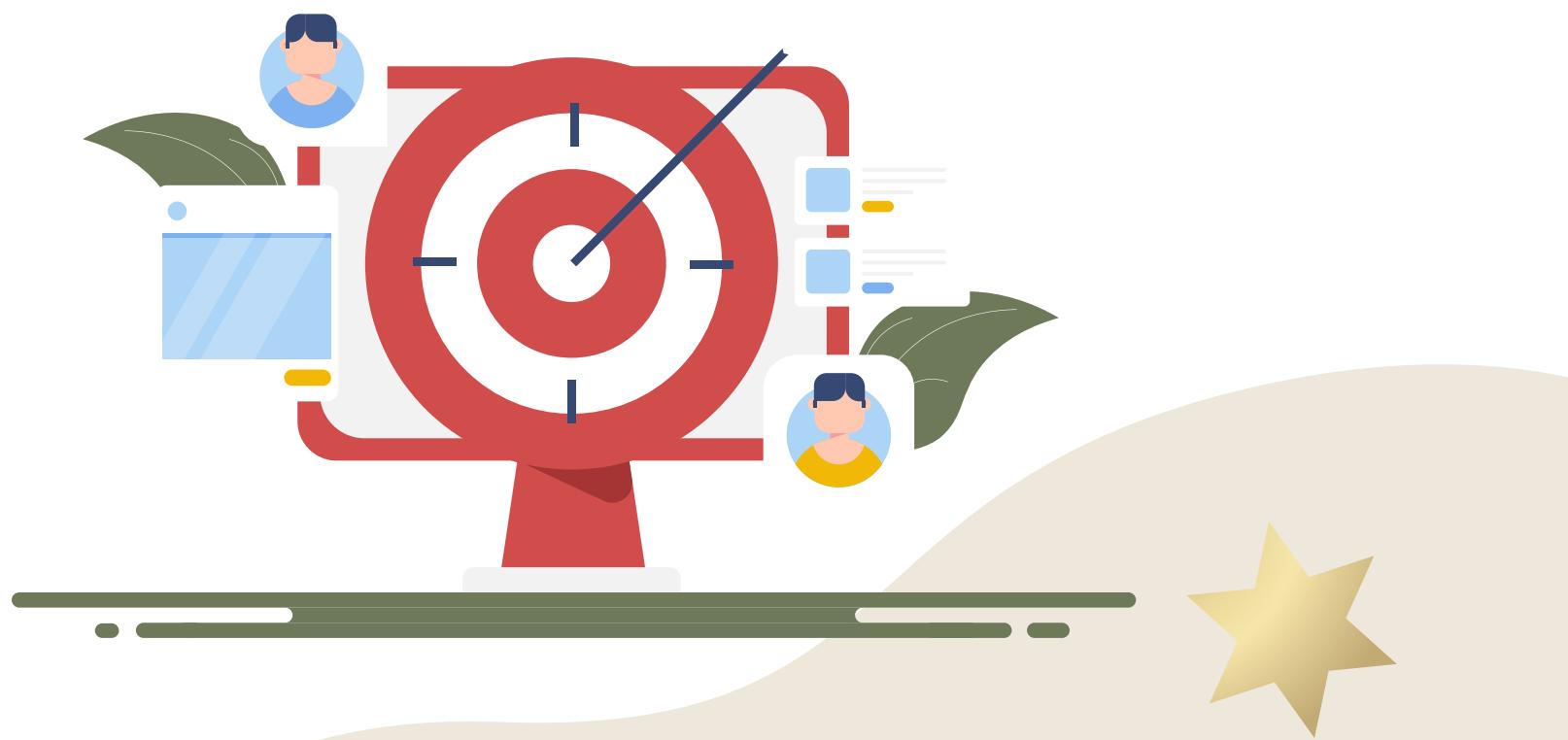
IDENTIFY YOUR
DATA NEEDS

Your holiday email strategy is only as strong as the data behind it. Start early to identify what data you have and what data gaps you need to fill to support your goals. Do you have the real-time customer data required to trigger abandoned cart emails? Have you captured customer preferences so you can target campaigns strategically to reduce email fatigue and unsubscribes? Is your product catalog connected to your email system to drive personalized recommendations?

Now is the time to audit what you have and define what you need. Take some time to map all of your data sources, including what data is available in each system, how it impacts the customer email experience, and who's in charge of that data. Knowing the full scope of your data needs now gives you time to update any data feeds and fully test them before the holiday rush begins.

CONNECT YOUR
DATA SOURCES

Data fragmentation is a common obstacle for enterprise marketers. During the busy holiday season, broken or inconsistent data flows can impact the customer experience — think mismatched messages between email and SMS or missing product images in a personalized email. Connecting your data sources is a critical step for creating an engaging customer journey!

Whether you're working with a CDP, CRM, ESP, or all of the above, it's important to think beyond the basic technical connections. For enterprise email marketers, it's about access to the right data, at the right time, in the right place to create a personalized experience for every customer. You need the data team and the marketing team working together to make it happen.

When planning for this step of the process, be sure to include adequate time for implementing and testing. Connecting data between systems and testing it thoroughly can take a while, especially in enterprise organizations with data governance standards and year-end code freezes, so start the process early.
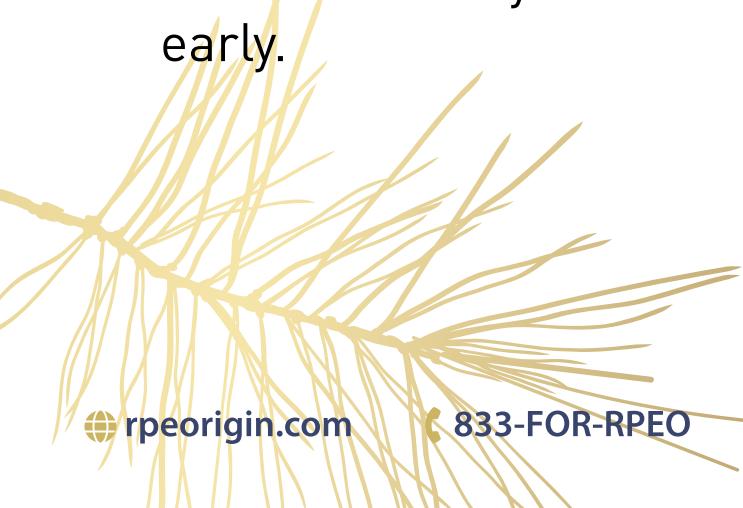
CREATE A
COMPREHENSIVE
STRATEGY

With audience insights and the right data flows in place, it's time to develop your campaign strategy. This goes beyond content calendars — it's about mapping every touchpoint across the season and identifying key moments for customers. From gift guides and cart abandon emails to shipping notices and last-minute offers, a solid strategy helps strengthen customer relationships and ensure your entire team is prepared for what's ahead.

A successful holiday email strategy balances planning with flexibility. Yes, you need a content calendar and pre-built automated journeys, but it's also good to leave room for real-time adjustments based on email performance and trends. Documenting your goals, KPIs, customer touchpoints, data flows, and creative needs helps ensure your team is all on the same page as you prepare for the holiday email marketing season.

MAKE IT PERSONAL FOR BETTER ROI

Personalization is no longer optional for enterprise email marketers — it's the difference between driving revenue and getting lost in the noise. The competition for customer attention is intense, especially during the holiday marketing season. Relevant, timely emails help you stand out in the inbox to increase engagement, drive conversions, and build customer loyalty.

Effective personalization is a mix of smart segmentation, the right data, and timely automations. When done well, it enables your brand to deliver the right message to the right person at the right time — all at the scale required by enterprise companies.

SEGMENT
YOUR AUDIENCE

Effective personalization starts with smart segmentation. Today's holiday shoppers expect messages tailored to their behavior, preferences, and timing, whether they're a last-minute buyer, a bargain hunter, or a high-value repeat customer.

Start with historical data to identify patterns. Who typically shops early? Who responds to loyalty perks? Which customers have the highest average order value for the holiday season? Who do you classify as a VIP customer? Also consider things like engagement data, browse and cart activity, and any content preferences when creating segments.

Use the available data to build dynamic segments that update in real-time as customers take action throughout the season

USE DATA TO
PERSONALIZE EMAILS

Once your audience is segmented, the next step is using data to personalize the emails they receive beyond first names and product recommendations. It's about tailoring the entire experience — subject lines, creative, offers, and send times — based on individual behavior and intent.

Use customer's browsing history to spotlight recently viewed items or related products and use their purchase frequency or loyalty status to trigger tiered offers. Add geolocation data to customize shipping messages or promote relevant in-store events. Layer in their engagement data to customize when they receive email.

For enterprise email marketers, personalization at scale requires a robust data infrastructure and collaboration between marketing and data teams. But the payoff is clear with increased engagement, stronger conversions, and higher lifetime value.
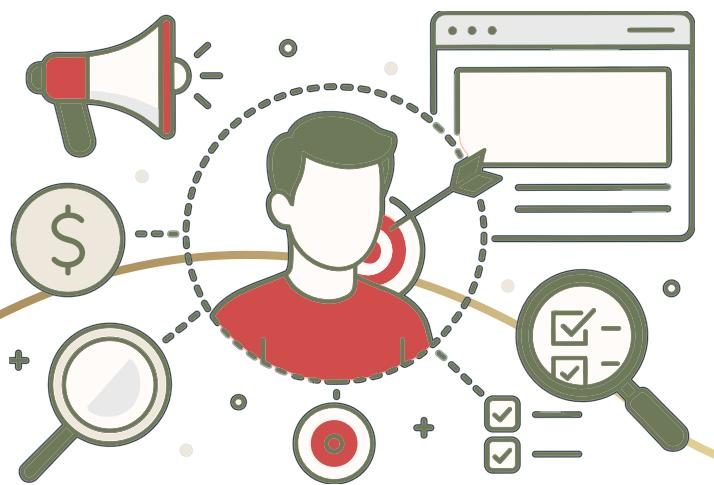
LEAN INTO
AUTOMATIONS

Automations are a critical tool in every enterprise email marketers toolbox because they allow you to respond to customer behavior in real time. Think triggered campaigns like cart and browse abandonment, back-in-stock alerts, VIP-only offers, and post-purchase upsells.

Start with reviewing your existing automated emails. Do existing triggers fit within holiday timelines? Are any updates needed to copy or creative? Next, look for opportunities to create new automations focused on capturing high-intent customers. If you don't have browse or cart abandon emails in place, that's a great place to start.

Timing is everything in holiday email marketing, and getting the right automations in place can save your team time and increase conversions because of timely messaging to your customers.
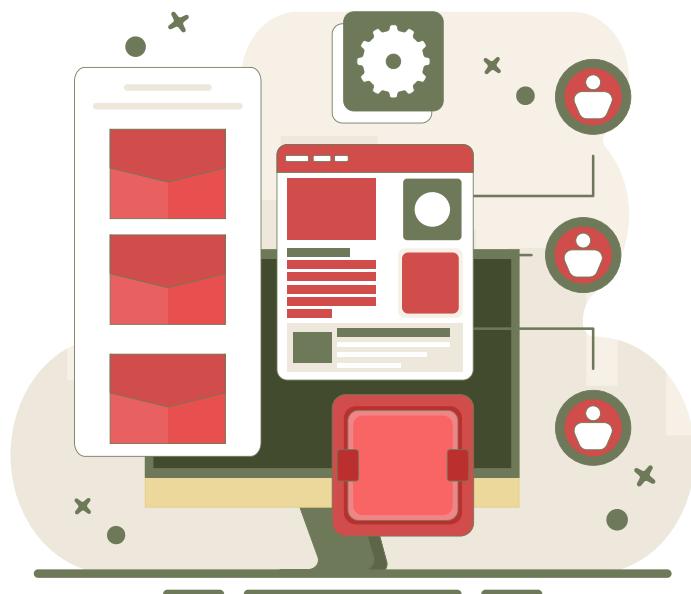
DON'T OVERLOOK
THE VALUE OF AI

There are plenty of AI tools available to help take your personalization to the next level. From dynamic subject line testing to individualized product recommendations to send time optimization, AI tools can analyze and act on significant amounts of data in a short period of time.

Enterprise brands can also tap into AI for forecasting, such as identifying which segments are most likely to convert or churn. Machine learning models can dynamically adjust content or timing based on real-time data, which frees up your team to focus on strategy while AI handles execution details.

The right AI tools paired with the human brains on your team is a powerful combination. When used strategically in your holiday email marketing, it's another layer of data and technology that can drive results.

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

Lots of email sends lead to lots of data, but it's important for enterprise email marketers to go beyond open rates and last-click conversions. The bigger focus becomes understanding what's working and why it's working so you can replicate that performance in the future.

Measuring what matters means defining the right KPIs, using technology to identify actionable insights, and carving out time to reflect on what the data is telling you. A strong measurement strategy turns your campaign results into a roadmap for growth.

IDENTIFY KEY
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Holiday campaigns often involve multiple goals, including revenue generation, customer acquisition, reactivation, loyalty engagement, and more. Before your first holiday email send, be sure everyone knows what metrics matter most and what success looks like for your holiday email campaigns.

Beyond opens and clicks, consider metrics like conversion rate, average order value, time to purchase, and lifetime value. Create a KPI dashboard in advance so you can quickly and easily track what's happening and know what needs attention.

LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY TO
OPTIMIZE REPORTING

With so many campaigns and automations in play, reporting can get messy fast if you don't have the right plan and tools in place. It's yet another place where data connections between systems are critical in saving time and providing the insights you need to make strategy decisions about what's next.

Invest time before the holidays to build your reporting infrastructure. Create dashboards that reflect your specific goals and give stakeholders visibility into live performance. Where possible, make it visual and automate alerts so teams can quickly spot what's working and what's not. Real-time access to clean, actionable data empowers the team to make adjustments and maximize ROI.

SCHEDULE A
POST-HOLIDAY DEBRIEF

Once the holidays are over and the new calendar year begins, it's easy to jump straight into the next campaign and lose sight of lessons learned from holiday emails. Schedule a post-holiday debrief now so it doesn't get overlooked.

Gather the team — including marketing, data, and operations — and review the results together. What exceeded expectations? What underperformed? What customer behaviors surprised you?

Capture lessons learned while they're still fresh and create a summary document that includes key insights plus recommendations for next year. It's a great way to build collaboration among different departments and ensure a smoother planning process in the future.
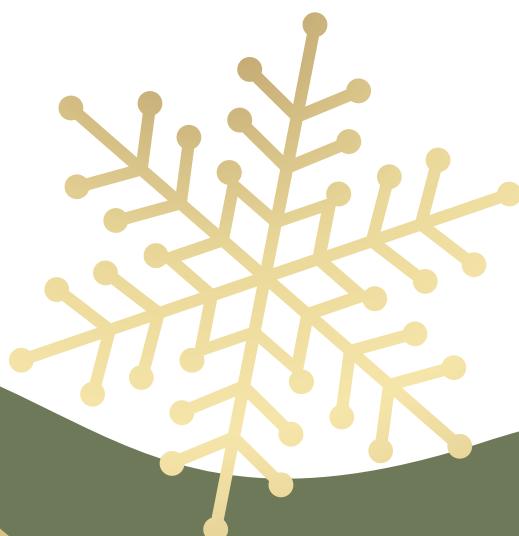
PART 4:

APPLY HOLIDAY LEARNINGS TO YEAR-ROUND EMAIL CAMPAIGNS

Holiday email marketing campaigns are intense — the stakes are high, timelines are short, and goals are aggressive. And while the intense pace can be a challenge, holiday email campaigns also present an opportunity to sharpen your strategy to create more sustainable results all year long.

IDENTIFY
LESSONS LEARNED

The sheer volume and velocity of holiday campaigns create a unique opportunity to learn what resonates with your customers. Once the season ends, take a step back and identify the wins worth repeating.

Which subject lines drove the highest engagement? Which customer segments had the strongest ROI? Did dynamic content, personalization, or send-time optimization make an impact? Document what worked not only for email engagement but also operationally for the team. If certain workflows or automations proved especially effective, consider how they can be applied to other campaigns.

EXPLORE WHAT
MISSED THE MARK

Some of the most valuable takeaways come from what didn't go as planned. Take a critical look at underperforming campaigns. Was the offer unclear? Was there unnecessary friction for the customer? Did something go wrong with personalization or targeting?

Dig into both the quantitative and qualitative feedback. Look at heat maps, engagement drop-off points, unsubscribe trends, and customer service inquiries. Did certain messages generate confusion or frustration? Did a specific tone or tactic not perform well with a particular segment? Rather than writing these off as one-time issues, treat them as insights to refine your broader approach.
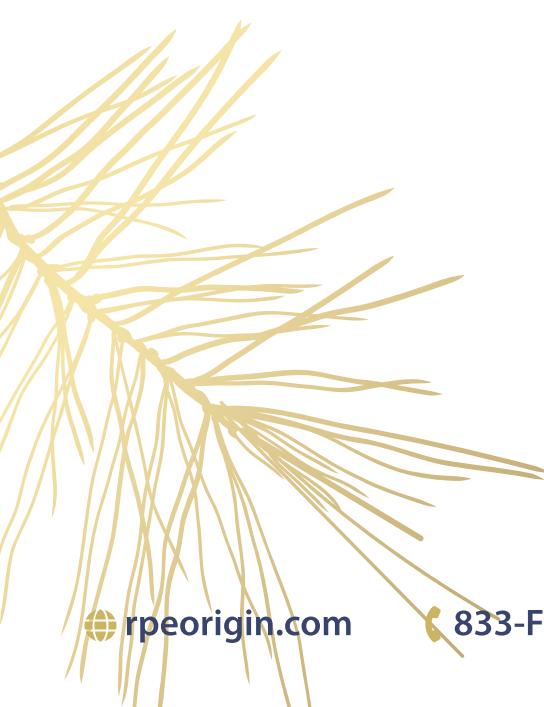
ADJUST YOUR
OVERALL STRATEGY

What you learn during the holiday season can impact everything from email cadence to design to testing strategies. If you created the data flows necessary for product recommendations in your holiday emails, leverage that data for the standard customer journey as well. If the urgency of the holiday season increased conversions, look for ways to create urgency throughout the year.

You may also find opportunities to get more creative with your regular emails. Holiday campaigns often push teams to try new formats, such as curated collections or interactive elements, that can break up the monotony of standard sends. Bring those same ideas — and the data and technology to support them — to your non-holiday sends to boost engagement and increase customer loyalty.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Holiday email marketing success doesn't happen by accident — it's the result of thoughtful planning, smart use of data and technology, and a commitment to learning and improving. Each step of the process plays a vital role in driving results.

As customer expectations evolve, your email strategy must evolve with them. That means thinking beyond campaign execution to build a smarter foundation, embrace the full potential of your data and technology, and learn from what works and what doesn't. With the right approach, your holiday campaigns can perform well in the moment and become catalysts for stronger customer relationships that lead to long-term growth.

About RPE origin

We are the agency the big guys use. We aim to be an indispensable partner for enterprise and agency clients who rely on email for success. Whether you need help choosing a new ESP, enhancing automated B2C or B2B customer journeys, or connecting data points across your tech stack, we help you move from simple to sophisticated to drive more revenue through email marketing.

Need help with your holiday email marketing?

Contact our team to get the conversation started.

- rpeorigin.com
- 833-FOR-RPEO
- hello@rpeorigin.com