

WHITE PAPER

Gift-Giving Trends to Boost Ecommerce Sales This Holiday Season

Learn how to shape your marketing and product strategies to help customers make purchasing decisions.

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Introduction

Know What Gift Recipients Want to Help Gift Givers Choose

U.S. holiday retail sales in 2023 grew [3.8% from 2022](#). Moving into 2024, 81% of U.S. online adults plan to shop for the winter holidays. This is a key season for businesses and a time of great competition to gain customers' attention. Being able to assist your customers in selecting their gifts is an invaluable tool for increasing sales.

To help retailers maximize their seasonal marketing and product strategies, Bizrate Insights surveyed a nationally representative sample of 800 U.S. consumers to gain insights on gift preferences for the forthcoming holidays. The survey asked questions about:



Types of gifts people prefer



Gift wrapping expectations



Appropriate gift budgets

In this white paper, you'll find out about the factors influencing consumers' holiday purchasing decisions and what makes gifts stand out to recipients. You'll also gain data-informed strategies to optimize your holiday shopping season.

Skip the Fancy Stuff: Practical Gifts Are Winning the Holidays

When asked what kind of gift they would be disappointed to receive this holiday season, survey responses included:

“
Something I have
no use for.”

“
Something I don't
use or do.”

“
Anything I don't
have any interest in
or have use for.”



These narrative responses match the quantitative data, with **47% of survey respondents preferring practical gifts like household goods or tools**, compared to just 27% expressing a preference for luxury items like designer products or high-end electronics.

The **preference for practicality also grows with age**—45% of survey respondents aged 18 to 29 expressed the preference compared to 68% of those aged 65 or older.

Only 12% of survey respondents expressed a preference for eco-friendly gifts, despite rising trends around sustainability. However, it could be that people view practicality as a way of being eco-conscious, receiving items they really need rather than excess.




Tap Into the Strong Appetite for Gift Cards

Worried that gift cards feel impersonal during the holiday season? Our survey results show clear evidence to the contrary, with **62% of respondents sharing that they are the most excited to receive gift cards this year.**

Women show slightly higher enthusiasm for receiving gift cards, with 64% saying they love to receive them compared to 52% of men.

Related Strategies FOR RETAILERS

- ✓ Highlight the flexibility and convenience of gift cards in your promotional messaging, especially when targeting shoppers buying for women.
- ✓ Offer themed or customizable gift cards to make this practical option feel more personal and thoughtful.



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Related Strategies FOR RETAILERS

- ✓ Accommodate the growing trend toward non-material gifts by promoting experience-based packages, such as travel, entertainment, or adventure activities.
- ✓ Partner with online and mobile platforms to offer digital gift bundles like streaming subscriptions or online courses.

Center Experiential and Digital Gifts

There is growing demand for non-material presents. **Thirty-six percent of survey respondents selected experiences like travel, events, or activities**, such as concert or museum tickets, as their preferred gifts. Additionally, **34% chose digital experiences like subscriptions or online courses** as the types of gifts they'd like to receive this year.

This tracks with previous [Bizrate Insights research](#), which found that consumers continue to have a high appetite for subscriptions. The most commonly reported subscriptions are streaming services for video (75%) or music (54%). Financial health and fitness or wellness subscriptions are also popular.

Personalize Gifts for Emotional Appeal

Consumers place a higher value on the emotional connection and thought behind a gift than on the brand or status. More reported being excited to receive handmade or personalized items (34%) than luxury items (27%), and **63% believe the best way to show care through gift-giving is to choose a gift that reflects the recipient's personal interests and hobbies.**

Survey respondents also noted that giving a gift with sentimental value (45%) and adding a heartfelt note or card (45%) are key ways to show someone you care.



63%

of consumers believe the best way to show care through gift-giving is to choose a gift that reflects the recipient's personal interests and hobbies.



Offer Budget-Friendly Shopping Experiences

This holiday season, practical and affordable gifts resonate more than extravagant purchases, even from loved ones.

Most survey respondents (44%) believe an appropriate gift from an acquaintance should be under \$25. The anticipated **budget for a close family member is higher, but typically still remains under \$100**, with 36% of those surveyed noting the appropriate value as being between \$25 to \$49 and 32% suggesting \$50 to \$99.

Additional **data shows** that 48% of U.S. online adults plan to spend about the same this holiday season as they did in 2023. However, 22% plan to spend less, and overall, 32% report having less money to spend this year than last.



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Entice With Simple Gift Wrapping Options

Consumers care more about the thought behind a gift than its external presentation. Very few customers (15%) prioritize elaborate gift wrapping, such as multiple layers of wrapping paper, ribbons, and bows.

Most prefer gifts wrapped simply in plain paper with minimal decorations (47%) or placed in a gift bag (45%). As gift bags can often be used again, they may also appeal to the 19% of survey respondents who prefer eco-friendly wrapping.

Note that only a small portion of respondents expressed no preference for gift wrapping (16%), indicating that presentation still plays a role in the gifting experience—just keep it simple.

65%

of consumers chose "thoughtfulness and effort" as one of the top three factors that makes a gift special.



Remember: It's the Thought That Counts

Sixty-five percent of survey respondents chose "thoughtfulness and effort" as one of the top three factors that makes a gift special, compared to just 35% selecting "brand or quality."

Overwhelmingly, consumers are appreciative of whatever gifts they receive. It's truly the thought that counts during the holidays, as emphasized by survey participants' narrative responses when asked what kind of gifts they'd be disappointed to receive:

- ✓ "I would never be ungrateful for a gift."
- ✓ "I would be grateful for anything because they went through the effort to give it to me."
- ✓ "If it is given with love, I would not be disappointed."
- ✓ "People are struggling, so whatever it is it's fine."
- ✓ "If someone thought of me enough to get a gift, I wouldn't be disappointed."

That said, two gift types stood out in the survey results as feeling disappointing to recipients: impersonal holiday candies and socks (mentioned by about 60 individuals).

Related Strategies FOR RETAILERS

- ✓ Add personalization options to common yet potentially less popular gifts like socks, such as custom embroidery or the opportunity to incorporate family or pet photos.
- ✓ Include "it's the thought that counts" messaging in your marketing to remind shoppers that something is better than nothing.
- ✓ Highlight stories of people's joy when they feel remembered during the holidays thanks to a simple gift.

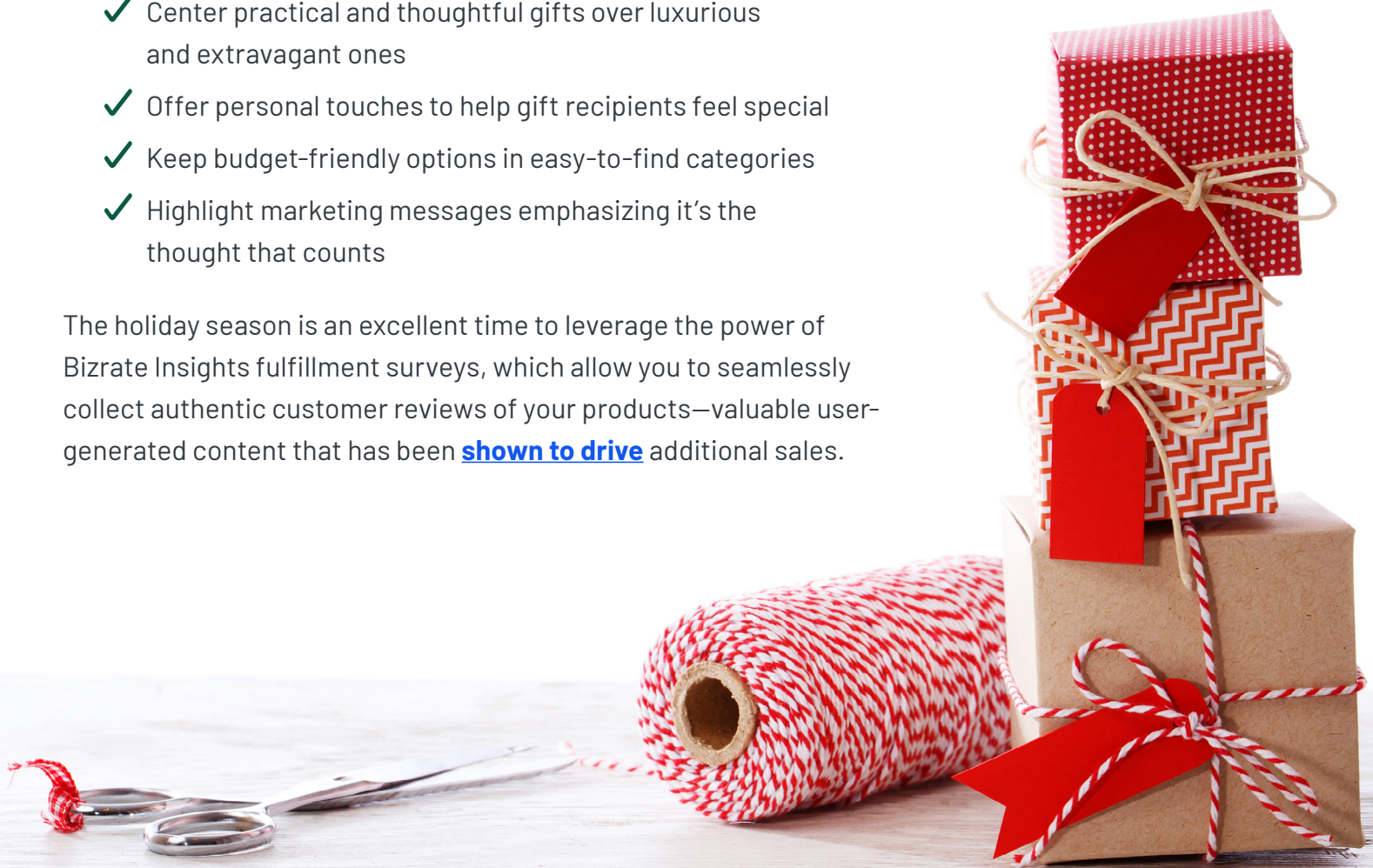
Conclusion

Understand Consumer Preferences for Effective Holiday Marketing and Product Positioning

Our survey results show that, in the 2024 holiday season, consumers will show preferences for function over flash and personalization over price. Use this voice-of-customer data to adapt your holiday product and marketing strategies accordingly:

- ✓ Center practical and thoughtful gifts over luxurious and extravagant ones
- ✓ Offer personal touches to help gift recipients feel special
- ✓ Keep budget-friendly options in easy-to-find categories
- ✓ Highlight marketing messages emphasizing it's the thought that counts

The holiday season is an excellent time to leverage the power of Bizrate Insights fulfillment surveys, which allow you to seamlessly collect authentic customer reviews of your products—valuable user-generated content that has been [shown to drive](#) additional sales.





We Can Help

Bizrate Insights delivers shopper insights to power your ecommerce strategy.

We collect 25 million survey responses annually, making us a top source for user-generated content (UGC), like verified customer reviews, seller ratings, and product insights. These are aggregated to deliver real-time KPIs for a 360° view of your customer experience:

- Uncover customer preferences and pain points
- Benchmark your performance against the industry
- Identify emerging trends ahead of the competition
- Fine-tune strategies and practices based on verified insights

Discover how Bizrate Insights can transform customer feedback into a driver for growth. Schedule a personalized demo today.

bizrateinsights.com/demo