

THE BUSINESS OWNER'S GUIDE

to the Holiday Season

A large, stylized snowflake graphic is positioned on the right side of the page. It features a central blue circle with a dotted border, surrounded by six dark blue, hand-drawn style branches. The text inside the circle is white and reads: "Prepare, plan, and boost sales this holiday season."

Prepare, plan,
and boost
sales this
holiday season.

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Holiday Shopping Statistics

90%

of Americans are planning holiday purchases this year, an increase from 82% in 2014.¹

78%

of 2014 holiday shoppers used the Internet for research.²

50%

of holiday shoppers said they'd be open to buying from a new business.³

29%

of holiday shopping will be completed by Black Friday.⁴

¹[International Council of Shopping Centers 2015 Holiday forecast](#)

²[think with Google](#)

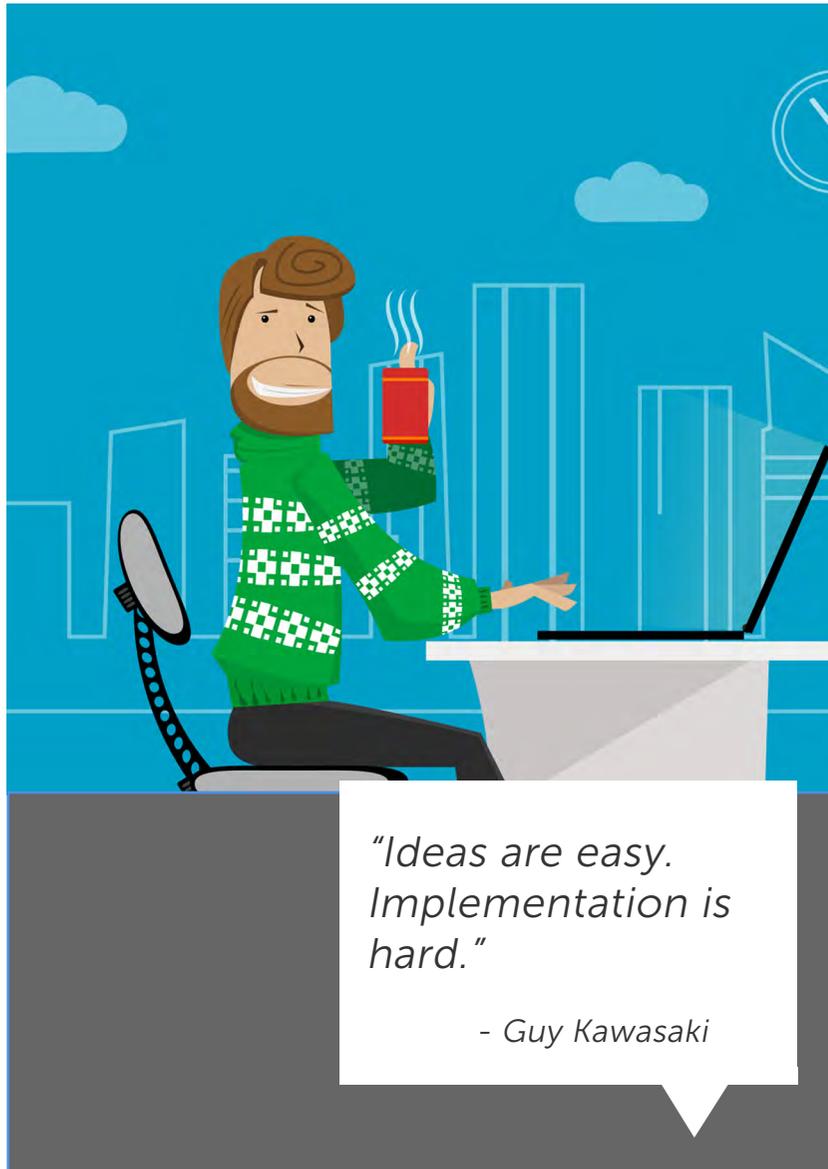
³[think with Google](#)

⁴[PwC 2015 Retail & Consumer Holiday Outlook](#)

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*"Ideas are easy.
Implementation is
hard."*

- Guy Kawasaki

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for business owners who are starting to plan for the holiday season.

Are you considering running a promotion, offering special seasonal discounts, taking some time off, or even planning to close up shop for a couple of days?

Then this guide is for you.

GOAL 1

**Get ready for
the holiday
season**

✓ Get ready for the holiday season

What should you be doing?

The hubbub around holiday promotions and events gives you a unique opportunity to involve your business in the excitement, but you need to decide what the right level of involvement is for your unique business.

Determine where to focus your efforts and time

Consider who you want to reach:

- **New Customers:** Running special promotions or advertising to people who are shopping for events like Small Business Saturday can be a great way to attract new customers.
- **Existing Customers:** 70% of companies say it's cheaper to retain a customer than acquire a new one.¹ With that in mind, [run a report from your database](#) to find your best customers and offer them a special rate or coupon as a thank you.
- **Your Community:** You might also consider focusing your time on awareness for your business. In this case, you could spend some time [optimizing your website](#) and then [promoting it online](#) and in your community at local events (bring your [mobile card reader](#) if you plan to sell at the event).

Once you know whom you'd like to reach, you can then determine how your business will participate in events like Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, and Cyber Monday.

Evaluate any impact the EMV change has on your business

The EMV change impacts different types of businesses in different ways. Make sure you understand what the change means for your business so you can confidently answer your customers' EMV questions. Here are some helpful resources:

- [How will EMV impact my business?](#)
- [Preparing your business for EMV](#)
- [EMV day is here, are you ready?](#)

¹eConsultancy.com

GOAL 2

**Be proactive
about your
cash flow**

√ Be proactive about your cash flow

What should you be doing?

Sometimes the most stressful thing about cash flow is the not knowing. If this describes you, especially if business slows down this time of year, is spend some time getting reacquainted with the details of your finances.

Get a pulse on your finances in a way that you can use to grow your business

What is your cash flow usually like this time of year?

- **Historically low:** If things slow down, as they do for many service businesses during the holidays, use this time to dig up hidden gems and opportunities. [Search your customer database for inactive customers or one-time customers](#); grab their email address and send them a special offer or an introductory offer if the [service you offer is recurring](#).
- **Historically high:** If you offer a service that keeps you busy through the holiday season, think about how you can push that momentum into the New Year. If you get many new customers during this time, consider running a New Year promotion to enroll your customers onto monthly subscriptions with a [recurring billing](#) setup.
- **Historically flat:** Maybe things stay steady through the holidays but you'd like to up the ante and boost sales through the season. Consider grabbing a booth at a local festival or event and bring your [mobile credit card reader](#) to sell merchandise or gift cards on the go, or [schedule appointments](#) with prospective customers.

You may feel like you don't have much control over the impact the holiday season has on your business, but taking an honest look at past years and making a proactive plan will give you an opportunity to make the most out of the season.

One of the biggest challenges for business owners

Feeling confident about cash flow is one of the biggest concerns of entrepreneurs. If you're using this time of year to gain insight into your business and get a jump on the next year, you might find these resources helpful.

- [Gain awareness through cash flow forecasting](#)
- [5 ways to make tax season easier next year](#)

GOAL 3

Communicate your plan

√ Communicate your plan

What should you be doing?

You're likely doing one of two things this holiday season: You are either taking some time off or you are working your tail off until things slow down. In either case, one often-overlooked step in rolling out the holiday plan is letting family, staff, and customers know about the plan.

Tell them early and remind them often

Who needs to know?

- **Your family:** After you decide what days you'll be closed, send an email or call your family and friends. This will make planning easier and you'll be less likely to encounter schedule conflicts since you've set an expectation for when you'll be free.
- **Your staff:** Ask your staff early what time they are hoping to take off and put it in your shared calendar. This is really useful if you use an [appointment booking software](#) for your customers to schedule online. Inputting this information early will ensure that you avoid any staffing issues as the holidays get closer.
- **Your customers:** If you've decided to run a promotion or offer discounts, let your customers know! Pull an [email list from your database](#) and send them a message letting them know of any specials, or the days that you'll be closed (and also to wish them well!). If you use social media for your business, make sure to [get the word out](#) there as well.

Having a plan is half of the battle, so once you have a plan, it is really important to let your customers and staff know: when you'll be open, if you are running any specials, if your schedule is changing for the holidays, and when your hours will be back to normal.

A commonly-overlooked step for smart business owners

Too many smart business owners forget to communicate. If you don't get the word out about your business and what makes you unique, people will have a tough time finding you. Here are some helpful resources to help you get into the practice of promoting your business.

- [5 ways to promote your business online and reach new customers](#)
- [5 ways to use \[Book Now\] button to get more appointments](#)

GOAL 4

**Set yourself
up for success
in the
New Year**

√ Set yourself up for success in the New Year

What should you be doing?

The holidays always come and go quicker than any of us are prepared for, leaving us with an accumulation of things we need to tackle on January 2nd. If you're planning for next year already, then you're ahead of the game, but make sure you're putting that effort into the right parts of your business.

Plan for your New Year return.

Decide what a successful New Year kickoff looks like for your business:

- **Kick things off:** If business slows down for you during the holidays, kick the year off with an awareness and customer appreciation campaign. [Promote your business online](#), attend local events in your community, and [use your customer database](#) to send an enticing promotion to existing customers.
- **Keep the momentum:** If your business benefited from the holiday shopping season, follow up on your holiday efforts by pulling a list of one-time customers, or gift card buyers, from your database and sending them a [special offer to sign up for a monthly subscription](#) to your services.
- **Look back to plan forward:** It might be the right time to take a step back and look at your cash flow. Maybe this is the year you want to start off by putting a big effort into understanding your cash flow so that you can [forecast and strategically plan your year](#).

It can feel like coming up for air after swimming in a sea of chaos when January hits, but you'll get a lot farther if you take a minute to not just tread water but to think about how you can improve your form.

A little inspiration for the New Year

The life of an entrepreneur is a daring and fulfilling one. If you're anything like the entrepreneurs we talk to, you are always looking for ways to go above and beyond. If this describes you, you might find these resources helpful:

- [Business New Year's resolutions](#)
- [Making the most of business charitable giving](#)
- [The company you keep matters](#), by PaySimple CEO Eric Remer

Season's Greetings and Well Wishes

We hope this guide was helpful and we wish you, your family, and your business the best this holiday season.

Who are we?

PaySimple is the leading provider of cloud-based solutions for service businesses, enabling them to securely accept payments, automate billing and notifications, and manage appointments and accounts from all devices.

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Testimonials

PatentLawNY.com



Michael Feigin, Esq.

"I love PaySimple, it makes everything so much easier. It keeps track of your invoices and you can make money easier with the invoice system."

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Chiropractic & Wellness
Hastings on Hudson



Dr. Caitlin Pietrosanto

"I have had a great experience with PaySimple as a payment processing partner. Everything is very clear, you know exactly when a payment will be posted to your account."

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Rip Media



Maury Rogow, CEO

"I can't believe I'm about to say this, but I'm literally paid faster, easier, and on time. And that's 100% true."

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