

## Your 16-week holiday planning guide

Here is the definitive consignment/resale shop owner's holiday planning guide to keep you on track for the 4th quarter.



### Week 16 Sunday, September 4

Clear out all summer, back-to-school or any other merchandise that's now seasonally outdated. Once Labor Day is over, so is the season. You should be well underway to decorating your shop for fall. Read ["4 cheap and easy fall merchandising ideas"](#) for inspiration. If you haven't done it already, **sit down with your staff and a calendar** in hand to map out your 4th quarter strategy. Use this holiday planning guide as your beginning point.

### Week 15 Sunday, September 11

Finish fall decorating. Make sure your windows and shop interior are fully decorated with gorgeous fall colors and seasonal merchandise. Planning should be under way if you're hosting a **Halloween event**. Read ["5 Halloween Ideas to Draw Shoppers in."](#) Consider adding a "Trick or Treats for Grownups" evening; Halloween coloring page contest for the kids or a Facebook photo contest featuring costumes or home decor created with items from your shop. Choose what type of food or prizes you'll be offering. If possible, partner with another local shop in your area.

### Week 14 Sunday, September 18

Autumn officially begins on September 22. Now's the time to review your internal processes as you plan for the holiday shopping season. Slow lines at checkout are a killer for maintaining repeat customers. How can you improve? Read ["13 ways to improve your consignment cash wrap."](#) What about your intake process? Make sure you are able to handle the influx of shoppers as well as the need for seasonal merchandise. When was the last time you took a serious look at your shop? Clean dressing rooms, bathrooms, floors and windows can make a big impression. Sign up now to participate in [Shop Small Saturday](#) on Saturday, November 26. Contact the other shops around you to see if they're participating as well. Determine the type of specials you'll offer on that day too.

### Week 13 Sunday, September 25

Preparations for your Halloween event should be well under way now. Design and print bag stuffers and signage for your shop. Read, ["5 tips for dynamite resale flyers"](#) to get some ideas. Map out your email campaign and how you will promote the event on all of your social media. A holiday planning guide wouldn't be complete if I didn't remind you of the importance of **mobile marketing**. Make sure all of your emails are optimized for viewing on mobile phones. You will also want to create incentives to bring shoppers back with coupons, additional rewards points or future events. Your shop should now be filled with Halloween-themed decorations.

## Week 12 Sunday, October 2

Our holiday planning guide continues with the first full week in October. Slip those Halloween event flyers into every shopper's bag and get your email campaign under way. Let your employees decide what clever costumes they'll wear during the week of Halloween. Let them know you'll be having a fun in-store competition where customers secretly vote for the best-dressed employee. Offer a gift card to the winner. Now's the time to **interview for seasonal help**. Bob Negan of [WhizBang!](#) offers these tips: "Focus on hiring people who are quick learners...who enjoy a fast-paced environment, who are willing to do any kind of work...and who are extremely friendly..." Hopefully, you're locating other shops in your area who are participating in the Shop Small event. Discuss with them the possibility of a shop crawl, sidewalk sale or treasure hunt.

## Week 11 Sunday, October 9

Believe it or not, this holiday planning guide says it's time to put Halloween aside and focus on November. The Thanksgiving season is a perfect time for community involvement and **generating goodwill** for your shop. Read "[5 tips for a Successful Store Event](#)" for some quick planning ideas. Consider having a canned food drive for your local food bank. A winter coat, hat and mittens drive for a homeless shelter is a great tie-in for a clothing shop. Blankets, towels and animal toy donations are perfect for a furniture store. Children's shops could collect toys and clothing for your local pregnancy center's baby store. Many charities will even provide a donation container for you. Arrange to have the organization pick up donations afterwards. Finalize with the other shops how you plan to market Shop Small Saturday. Be sure to purchase small, holiday impulse-buy items for your register too. Purchase any gift cards or gift certificates shoppers can use as Christmas gifts.



## Week 10 Sunday, October 16

Evaluate what needs to be changed from Halloween to Thanksgiving decor. How will you change your in-store signage and your front window? Can you capitalize on any **local events** such as your town's football team, homecoming dances, Veteran's Day parades or fall festivals? Begin planning your shop's Christmas event by outlining a calendar for additional employees, food and beverages, special merchandise and prizes. Your exciting and fun Halloween event should take place next week unless you're actually holding it on Halloween. Begin teasing Christmas with emails about upcoming merchandise, special surprises and extended shopping hours.

## Week 9 Sunday, October 23

This is the week your employees should have fun wearing a variety of costumes, handing out candy and promoting your Halloween event. Make sure they're ready to take lots of pictures to post on all of your social media. Be prepared to name the winner of your in-store costume contest and post their photo on social media. Christmas is now 8 weeks away and you should have in mind what your window decor will look like. Read "[Holiday window displays on a budget.](#)" It's time to determine your **Christmas promotions** too, including Black Friday and/or Shop Small

Saturday. Whether you choose a one-time event or something as simple as offering Christmas cookies and hot cider throughout the month, start planning. Contact a local high school or senior citizen group to see if they will offer free holiday gift wrapping in return for a charitable donation.

## Week 8 Sunday, October 30

If your consignment or resale shop is open on Mondays, you may see some last-minute costume shoppers. Halloween is over though and you're headed full steam ahead to the biggest shopping season of the year. Set up definitive times for **sales training** for your employees and review policies for such things as shoplifting. Read ["Be Prepared for Shoplifters."](#) Make sure they're familiar with the current brands of merchandise you offer and how to cross sell products. If you're going to add extended hours for the holidays now is the time to begin promoting those. If you're participating in a local Thanksgiving donation drive, create your social media schedule, bag stuffers and signage now. Your Shop Small and holiday hour signage should be in your window.

## Week 7 Sunday, November 6

Begin your donation drive this week. Be sure your staff is thankful and recognizes everyone who takes the opportunity to donate. Take photos with shoppers and staff to use on your social media. If you have chosen not to do a donation drive, have your staff tie in with the season of thanks in a special way. For instance, they can hand out "Thank You" cards with return incentives for shoppers. Schedule team sales goals, holiday parties, sales rewards and avenues for recognizing **exceptional customer service** for your employees during the Christmas holiday. In-store holiday signage that gives clear instructions should be ready to be put up in a week. Determine your top 25 - 50 customers and send them a special invitation for holiday shopping. All of your Shop Small Saturday plans should be finalized and clearly explained to your staff.



## Week 6 Sunday, November 13

Our seasonal countdown moves into week 6. Many stores take this time to transition to Christmas decor with Thanksgiving one week away. Holiday signage indoors and out should be in place. Your Shop Small and/or Black Friday event marketing should begin. The sights, sounds and smells of the Christmas season should fill your shop. Remember, your front window is your biggest billboard. Create Christmas windows that are magical, drawing customers in from outdoors. Your windows must reinforce the quality of merchandise they will find inside too. Your staff, including those part-timers you've added should know their **holiday schedules**, especially what's required of them for Black Friday and Shop Small Saturday. Read ["4 steps to keep salespeople focused this holiday."](#) Invite your shoppers to sign up on your social media or give you their email address to receive special pre-holiday offers.

## Week 5 Sunday, November 20

Thanksgiving week is a huge transition. This is when you, your staff and your shop completely transform from fall to Christmas. Your donation drive ends later this week and you have set the stage for the holidays. Review store policies for such things as layaways, rewards points and wish lists. Inform your staff of any new merchandise that has come in the store. Double check that the **flow for shopping and final check-out** is clearly marked. Now's the time to begin thinking like your shoppers. Their mindset has changed. They are no longer looking as much for themselves as they are for others. Change the conversation to, "Who are you buying for this year?" Thursday, November 24 is Thanksgiving. Friday, November 25 is Black Friday and Saturday, November 26 is Shop Small Saturday. Looking ahead, Sunday and Monday the 27th and 28th are Cyber holidays.

## Week 4 Sunday, November 27

I feel a bit like Casey Kasem's American Top 40 with my holiday planning guide countdown, but we are now just a month away. This next month will be a whirlwind. Tuesday, November 29 is "Giving Tuesday" so be sure to share lots of photos of your charity donations. Your holiday hours and special shopping incentives should be promoted regularly through social media and emails. Don't send too many emails though. During this busy holiday season, customers tend to start deleting more out of stress. Make sure your **email messages** are relevant and fun. Read ["Send clever, digital greetings this holiday"](#) to get some ideas for Christmas greetings to send to your customers. Planning for inventory reduction and winter decor after the first of the year should start now.



## Week 3 Sunday, December 4

Continue to energize your staff. Encourage them to wear Santa hats or ugly Christmas sweaters and hand out candy canes to everyone who comes in the door. Give them a reason to interact with each shopper. Read ["Should You Say 'Merry Christmas?'"](#). Shift your merchandise to make your store look fresh and new so customers will want to return. If you're in an area where weather is an issue, make sure your outside is as clean as the inside of the store. If you're doing other holiday promotions beyond Shop Small Saturday, begin marketing efforts this week. This would be the perfect time to start a "12 Days of Christmas" promotion highlighting specific merchandise each day. Your **freebies** should also begin...free gift wrap, free concierge or free delivery.

## Week 2 Sunday, December 11

As Bob Negen says, "There's a time to work 'on' your business and a time to work 'in' your business." Your job now should be to lead the charge. Be on the sales floor interacting with staff and shoppers. Who doesn't like to be personally assisted by the owner of the company? Monday, December 12 is **Green Monday**. This is the day you really begin to promote your holiday sales online. Use your Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to heighten excitement about new merchandise arriving. Our seasonal countdown wouldn't be complete if we didn't talk about the coming New

Year. Be thinking and planning for changes and additions you would like to see in your shop in 2017. Take a closer look at yourself too. Sign up to receive ["Your Consignment Business Check Up."](#)

## **Week 1 Sunday, December 18**

Today is known as **Free Shipping Day**. If shipping is at all a part of your business, today is the day to offer it free. By now, shoppers and staff are frazzled. This is a key week to create brand ambassadors for your store. If you and your staff can show patience, kindness and an extra willingness to be helpful, you will have customers for life. Doing extra things for your staff this week can go a long way too. Bring cookies, fruit or pastries in the morning; give special hand-written thank you notes and sincere compliments to boost morale and attitudes.

## **Friday, December 25 Merry Christmas!**

Whew! You survived. Congratulations! Our seasonal countdown is complete. I hope this holiday planning guide made your life just a little easier

The staff of Traxia wish you a very prosperous 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and a very Happy New Year!



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