



SEASONAL MARKETING: STRATEGIES USING THE CALENDAR

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Abstract:

In this ever-dynamic world, the only thing that is constant is change. Change when happens, applies to all; then why should marketing remain the same? Each year is a witness to various seasons, and each season requires separate marketing efforts to be carried out differently. Seasonal marketing thus helps to capitalise on the varied demand through varied marketing. Every season requires special efforts and hence leads to different sales.

Keywords: Capitalizing; Marketing; Promotion; Seasons; Sales; Customers.

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1. Introduction

Primarily all products are seasonal in nature be it clothes, toys, gadgets, appliances or even food products. Seasonality is predominant in casing business strategies to help make the most out of the sub divisions of a year. These seasons help provide companies with great opportunities and hence are critical for revenue and break evens. Seasonality of any product or service thus makes it different from the other and provides leveraging to businesses.

"The tendency of consumer expenditure on a good or services to vary in some pattern over the course of a year" -Ideas in Marketing, Kubacki (2013)

Good marketers never miss out on any chance to maximise sales and hence profits of any product. This is usually supported with peak in sales which is usually the peak season of these products or services, the contrast of which is off or non-peak season. But what makes it vital is the right timing to tap these seasons and taking out the best of it.

2. Objective

This study has been conducted for the various objectives

- 1) To understand the meaning of seasonal marketing
- 2) To study the importance of seasonal marketing

- 3) To study the various seasons of marketing
- 4) To analyse the possible ways of strategizing seasonal marketing
- 5) To study some famous examples of seasonal marketing

3. Methodology

This paper is an attempt of Descriptive Research. The data is collected through secondary sources such as newspaper articles, journals, books and web sources.

4. Concept

Seasonality is a characteristic of a time series in which the data experiences regular and predictable changes that recur every calendar year. Any predictable change or pattern in a time series that recurs or repeats over a one-year period can be said to be seasonal- *Investopedia*.

The fluctuations in the website traffic and sales is usually caused by a host of factors, seasonality being one of them. Good marketers are those who put in the right efforts to scoop out the maximum of it to reap the seeds of greater sales. Seasonal marketing consists of tuning the marketing campaigns to the ongoing events. Or, targeting important events and national or global holidays for the industry. Seasonal marketing is all about looking at the calendar, studying the days, then identifying appropriate opportunities and finally capitalizing on them.

Seasonal marketing typically provides best results to B2C businesses because customers are involved at one end who buy things based on seasons, rather than a B2B business which is usually commercial than user oriented.

The most common seasons for marketing universally are New Year's, Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, Halloween. In India, domestic festivals take a place such as Diwali, Holi, Raksha Bandhan, Ganesh Chaturthi, Eid and then there are regional festivals such as Pongal, Baisakhi, Durga Puja etc. Indians thus get the advantage of being a diverse nation which provides great opportunity to marketers of domestic and MNCs. Some companies have come up with auspicious buying such as AkshayaTritya for Jewellery, Dhanteras for utensils, etc. It's very necessary to understand web traffic seasonality to be crystal clear and effective. Web traffic seasonality is the predictable, yearly upward and downward trends in the search results that continually fluctuates in annual cycle. Hence, seasonal marketing requires homework and planning actions in advance to be ready for the upcoming season.

5. Importance of Seasonal Marketing

Changing times requires changed tools and strategies, and seasonal marketing helps companies to adapt to changes of seasons based on the existing traffic and planning.

Marketers usually leave no opportunity to build healthy relations with their customers and in the present era of social media, CRM is gaining unmatched popularity. Some of the most prominent advantages of Seasonal marketing are:



5.1. Increase in Sales

Whenever there are promotions and festivities, buyers go weak and end up purchasing products in high spirits. Seasonal marketing thus acts as a catalyst to increased sales and ensures that the cost of marketing is fetched through such an increase.

For example, during Diwali most electronic companies offer large number of deals as its an auspicious time of festivities.

Greeting cards, confectionaries have their maximum sales around the festive seasons.

5.2. Showcase of The Product

Marketing is a great tool to display what is available to be offered. So with seasonal marketing hoardings, there can be a display of the various things that the customers can purchase and hence it acts as informational campaign too.

For example, most companies near the year closing distribute their respective calendars which showcase their products along with greetings to the customers.

Or Halloween is the only time of the season when such costumes can be displayed, promoted and sold.

Dastkar Winter Crafts Mela is another example of showcase and display of hand woven crafts products, an initiative of Delhi Tourism.

5.3. Thanking the Loyal Customers

Loyalty is most precious to any company for ensuring continuous and future sales, so most marketers take this opportunity to thank these buyers in form of different marketing techniques. For example, during Dhanteras most jewellers provide a gold coin free or provide discounts on making charges.

5.4. Engage and Promote

Promotion forms a vital part of marketing. Seasonal marketing gives companies and it sales just the right push and also engages their customers in the purchase process of the product.

For example, Valentine's Day involves gifts for partners. Valentine's Day promotions promotes purchases for and by loved ones and creates an emotional value of the same. This not only promotes the product or gifts but also engages the customers.

Or whenever there are movie releases around a particular season like Fifty Shades of Grey trilogy has been releasing near Valentine's worldwide, popular Bollywood stars make their movies release on Eid or patriotic films are released near Independence or Republic Day.

5.5. Automatic Buying Pressure

Winters is a season of heaters, shawls and knits, similarly summers is the season of cottons, linens and Air conditioners. Festivals are happy occasions and usually involves excessive spending for the purpose of shopping for personal use or gifting. In India there is a trend of Diwali parties, abroad there is a trend of New Year and Christmas parties. Christmas is usually associated with Santa Clause and surprises. Usually parents tend to be under an automatic pressure to buy in such festive seasons. When the temperatures drops.

5.6. Spontaneous Purchases

Recently ALDO India had launched a winter special promotional scheme by offering a 1+1 offer on its Bags, Footwear and accessories. This offer was seen in most major malls across India and laid to spontaneous purchases in huge numbers from the footfall in the mall by people who spontaneously purchased these items.

Such kind of promotions lead to a varied unplanned purchases and hence increased sales to the company as most purchasers are deal breakers and welcome such marketing agendas with open arms for personal benefits.

6. Common Seasons of Marketing and Marketing Strategies for Them

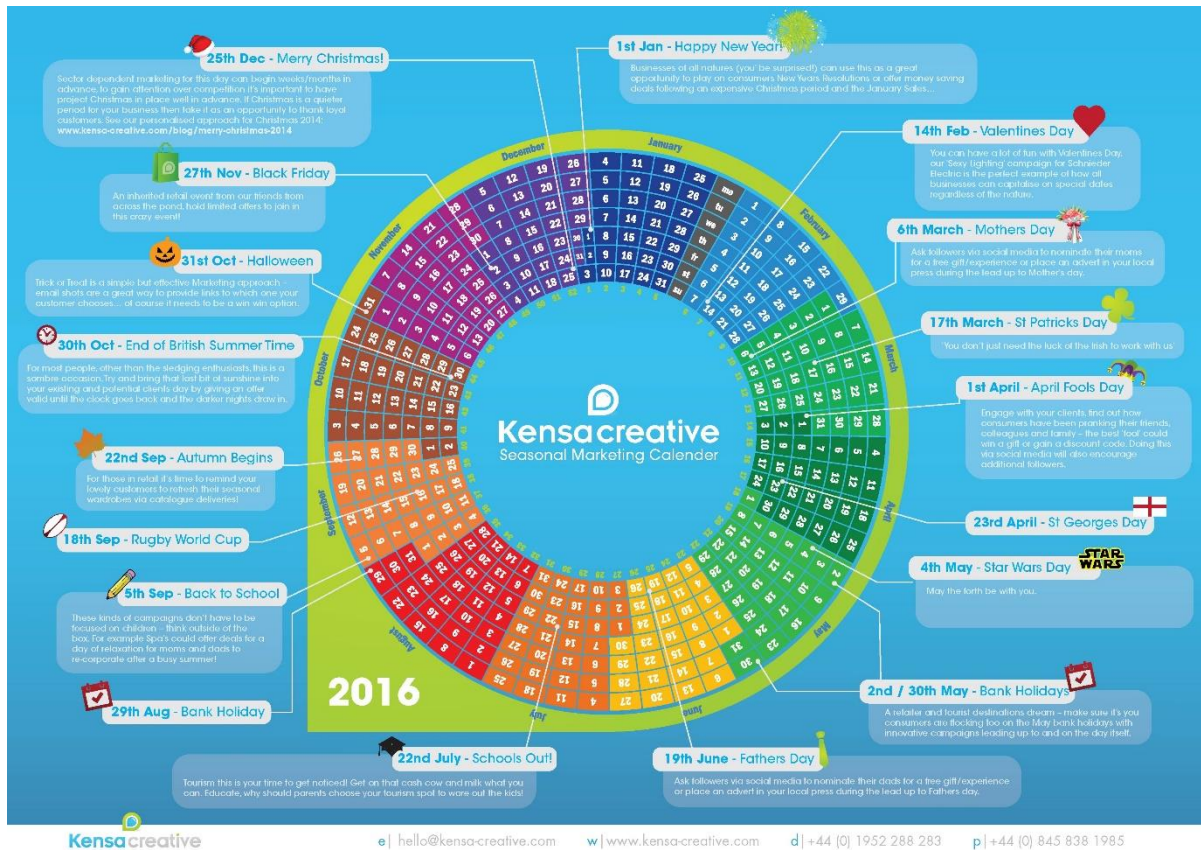


Figure 1: Marketing Calendar | Source: <https://unamo.com/blog/inbound-marketing/seasonal-marketing>

- New Year's**
 New year usually symbolises new beginnings, and is a great opportunity to promote new things as people indulge in new year resolutions. Some of the most common resolutions are being healthy and fit and weight reductions. Hence January can be a good season to promote Gym memberships, sporty wear and healthy diet oriented food products such as oats, or low fat milk etc.
- Valentine's Day**
 Valentine's Day is a day where people take an opportunity to shower their loved ones with surprises and gifts. Restaurants, florists, greeting card companies usually take this day a massive sales day. Marketing of this day is styled in such a fashion that love is made the theme to promote their product or service. Archies, Hallmark have maximum sales around this season. Also certain companies promote couple offers on things like wallets, perfumes and watches.
- Mother's Day**
 Everybody is emotional about their mother and this day provides a great opportunity for everyone to express their gratitude to their mother. It is a great retail holiday and helps marketers plan their promotions to things that every mother or lady may like. Jewellery,

handbags, and clothes see a boom. Special discounts can be offered through posting a selfie with the mother, or getting her along to the retail store.

- **Summer vacations**

Indian schools or universities see a break during summer months of May to June, this is usually called as the vacation season. Holiday websites and Travel agents seldom capitalise on this time with the best marketing strategies, also certain experience based events such as carnivals, food or youth festival see a great footfall due to summer break.

- **Independence Day**

This is a great opportunity to promote the national flag, jerseys or movies related to patriotism. Some companies also offer discounts based on the Date or the number of years of independence of the nation such as for clothes, jewellery, appliances etc.

- **Halloween**

Slowly this season is gaining importance in India as well. Various restaurants have started hosting Halloween based parties, serving special theme menus, others have started supplying costumes and props for Halloween.

- **Christmas**

Christmas is celebrated worldwide and is considered an auspicious day as it's symbolises birth of Jesus. There are Christmas special sales everywhere on all sorts of products and it's a major season of ever rising sales.

- **Regional Festivals such as Holi, Diwali and Eid**

India is a multi-cultural nation and is also a house of several festivals and traditions. Every festival holds difference relevance and history. These can be used as marketers as specific different marketing seasons. Where Holi is the festival of colors, this season can be used to promote everything colourful and bright; Eid and Diwali is considered as the festival of lights hence people prefer buying new products in that time. Hence varied marketing techniques are used to ensure that maximum benefit is reaped from this festive season across all types of products.

6.1. Certain Other Famous Days for Seasonal Marketing

- **Navratre**

These are considered as auspicious days for new beginnings. Navratre fasts are a popular tradition in India. As they happen twice an year, it provides marketers great seasonal opportunities. Many MNCs have also capitalised on it such as Dominos coming up with special Navratri Pizza from ingredients allowed in that fast, Uncle Chips coming up with a Navratri variant of its plain salted chips. Many other food joints have started keeping this fast special menu. Also events such as prayer

- **Dhanteras**

This auspicious festival marks the starting of Diwali celebrations in India, it usually involves purchase of precious metals, utensils and a step towards cleanliness. Hence it's a season to promote all these products. Paints companies can market their product with an idea to promote whitewash around this time, Jewellers can offer festive schemes.

- **Oktoberfest**

Originally started in Munich, this festival is making its way to other parts of the world too. Starting near September and ending in October, this festival is a beer lover's delight.

Marketers take this season as an opportunity to promote beer and launch its new variants. Mostly this season is capitalised by breweries and pubs and is quite a hit amongst the marketers.

7. Some Famous Seasonal Marketing Campaigns

- Some of the most famous seasonal marketing campaigns are:
- **Starbucks Red cups**
The red cups of Starbucks marks the arrival of its festive winter range such as winter cakes, ginger bread latte.
- **“12 Days of Donuts” By Krispy Kreme**
With special packaging, promotional videos and gift coupons, this seasonal marketing campaign was quite a hit.
- **“Wishes Across America” By Macy’s**
This campaign launched in 2016 was in tie up with Make-A-Wish foundation, involved writing to Santa Clause for the Christmas season.

8. Conclusion

Seasonal marketing bridges the gap between the businesses and its customers. Through calendar cycles, changes are brought in business cycles implementing seasonal changes. Various festivals and seasons across the world provide marketers with great opportunities, if when utilised can be rightly strategized for maximum sales.

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