

**Winning with  
seasonal marketing:**  
a gamification strategy  
handbook

***playable***

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# Foreword

Welcome to Playable's ultimate handbook on seasonal marketing

As a [marketing gamification platform](#) that specializes in helping brands drive engagement and revenue, we know firsthand the power of gamification and playable experiences when it comes to marketing. By adding game mechanics to your seasonal campaign strategy, you can create a memorable experience that drives customer engagement and generates excitement and stand-out for your brand!

In this handbook, we'll show you how to plan your seasonal marketing strategy for success and harness the potential of gamification to create seasonal campaigns that stand out from the crowd. You'll discover tips, tricks, and best practices for identifying seasonal opportunities, developing a winning marketing plan, and executing campaigns that drive demonstrable results.

So, whether you're a seasoned marketer or new to the game, get ready to level up your seasonal campaigns with gamification!

## Chapter 1

# Introduction

## An introduction to seasonal marketing

Seasonal marketing involves tailoring promotional and advertising efforts to align with seasonal events, holidays, or cultural celebrations. By taking advantage of the increased consumer spending and activity during certain times of the year, brands can promote specific products or services that are in high demand during that season.

Seasonal marketing can help brands stay relevant and engage with their customers by tapping into the emotions, interests, and behaviors associated with each season and using them as hooks in their promotional messaging and approach. For example, a clothing retailer may create a summer marketing campaign to promote its swimwear line, while a restaurant may offer a special Valentine's Day menu for couples. Ultimately, the goal of a seasonal marketing campaign is to increase sales, customer engagement, and brand awareness by creating a sense of urgency and excitement around a specific occasion or time of the year.

# Why is seasonal marketing so important for brands?

There are 5 major reasons why brands should implement a well-defined seasonal marketing strategy:

## 1. Capitalize on increased consumer demand

By aligning marketing efforts with seasonal events, holidays, or cultural celebrations, brands can take advantage of periods when consumer demand and spending are high.

## 2. Generate more revenue

Seasonal marketing campaigns can also promote products or services that are in high demand during a particular season, allowing brands to generate more revenue during that time.

Whether that's specific food & beverage items around Easter or summer BBQs, typical 'love' or relationship-themed items around Valentine's Day, or even more general gift-worthy items around Christmas or other religious gift-giving periods, creating campaigns around these products can help you boost sales.

## 3. Increase brand awareness

By creating engaging seasonal marketing campaigns, brands have a key timely hook to engage with their audience and increase brand awareness among target audiences.

A well-crafted seasonal campaign can help brands differentiate themselves from competitors by showcasing their unique value proposition, personality, and brand story, helping them build a stronger emotional connection with their audience.

## 4. Foster customer loyalty

Seasonal campaigns can help foster customer loyalty by providing brands with an opportunity to connect with their audience on a deeper level. By offering personalized and playable experiences, showcasing brand values, and engaging with customers on social media, brands can create a sense of emotional connection with their customers, which encourages repeat business and strengthens brand loyalty.

Additionally, offering exclusive deals and discounts with playable experiences during seasonal campaigns can make customers feel valued, and appreciated, and incentivize them to keep coming back.

## 5. Experiment with new products or services

Finally, seasonal marketing campaigns can be used to test and experiment with new products, services, or marketing strategies that may not be viable at other times of the year. It's an opportunity to get creative.

For example, warm clothing items are more marketable in winter than in summer, making winter campaigns an ideal time to launch new collections, deals, and content. However, during Summer, a company could create out-of-season extraordinary sales using a fun playable campaign.

Overall, seasonal marketing is a valuable strategy for brands looking to stay relevant, maximize their marketing ROI, and drive sales growth.

## Gamification: the key to a successful seasonal marketing strategy

The goal of playable marketing delivered through gamification is to leverage game mechanics to create fun, memorable and interactive experiences for your audience, while also meeting your marketing objectives.

Our customer experience shows that incorporating gamification into seasonal marketing campaigns drives better results than traditional, more 'passive' campaigns..

In fact,

- Marketing gamification campaigns lead to [40x more engagement](#), from an average of 1,5 seconds to 67 seconds.
- Consumers are 56% more likely to click a gamified ad than a static one.
- 51% of people agree that winning a voucher is more valuable than being given a voucher

By creating fun and interactive playable experiences for customers, brands can capture their attention and motivate them to take action, such as making a purchase or sharing the campaign with their social network

Gamification can also help brands collect valuable data and insights on customer behavior and preferences, which can enhance deeper customer insights for planning future marketing efforts. Overall, gamification can be a powerful tool for brands looking to improve their seasonal marketing strategies and stand out in crowded markets.

# Understanding seasonal marketing

Seasonal marketing is all about timing, and it starts with understanding the seasons, events, occasions, and holidays you want to focus on. Each season has its own unique characteristics and cultural events/ holidays, which create opportunities for brands to connect with consumers. Looking at and planning which events make sense in relation to brand alignment and product/service offering is also important to maintain authenticity in the approach.

## Seasonal marketing: the 4 Seasons

By understanding the characteristics of each season, marketers can tailor their marketing campaigns to resonate with consumers and capitalize on the opportunities presented by each season.

### 1. Spring

Spring is associated with new beginnings, growth, and renewal. It's a time when people are looking to refresh their surroundings and shake off the winter blues. As a result, spring is an ideal time for cleaning products, home improvement services, and fashion accessories that reflect the season's light and airy feel.

### 2. Summer

Summer is all about warmth, energy, and excitement. People are outdoors more, enjoying sports and leisure activities, and looking for ways to stay cool. This season is perfect for promotions related to travel, outdoor activities, and summer-inspired food and beverages.

### 3. Fall

Fall is characterized by change, comfort, and warmth. It's a time when people begin to prepare for the colder months ahead by making home improvements, buying new clothes, and indulging in comfort foods. Fall campaigns often revolve around cozy blankets, pumpkin spice, and fall foliage.

### 4. Winter

Winter is a time for celebration, togetherness, and nostalgia. The holiday season dominates winter marketing, but other promotions can tap into the feeling of [hygge](#) (a Danish concept of coziness) with products that evoke warmth and comfort, such as candles, blankets, and hot beverages.

**By understanding the characteristics of each season, marketers can tailor their marketing campaigns to resonate with consumers and capitalize on the opportunities presented by each season.**

## Seasonal marketing: holidays and cultural events

There are many holiday and cultural events throughout the year that have a significant impact on seasonal marketing. They often need different approaches and should be researched well before you dig into creating a campaign concept.

Back-to-school season, for example, is a crucial time for retailers selling school supplies, clothing, and electronics, and it is an opportunity for brands to launch seasonal marketing campaigns targeting parents and students. In the USA, the expected [back-to-school spending in 2022](#) was \$864 per household. Electronics was the top category of purchased goods, followed by clothing and shoes. Because of the high inflation, families were looking for discounted items and offers more than ever in 2022. Therefore successful campaigns could include special offers, discounts, competitions, and so on.

Valentine's Day is another major event for seasonal marketing, with many brands creating promotions and offers to attract couples looking for gifts or special experiences. [In 2023](#), 52% planned to celebrate the US, and the average spending per consumer was around \$192,80. The top 5 gifts were candies (57%), greeting cards (40%), flowers (37%), an evening out (32%), and jewelry (21%). Those between the ages of 35 to 44 were expected to spend the most. Moreover, there was a rise in people planning to spend on gifts for friends, classmates/teachers, and pets compared to previous years. There was also a rise in people planning to give an experience as a gift. Finally, more than half of consumers said they would take advantage of sales and promotions.

Researching and knowing these facts before you start planning your campaign will help you to create campaigns that are most relevant to the needs and behaviors of your audience around that Holiday..

There are many many more seasonal events and holidays throughout the year such as Easter, Christmas, Pancakes Day, or Single's Day. The idea is not to target them all but to choose some that make sense for your customers, and target audience, and that align with your brand, and allocate your budget accordingly between them.



## Seasonal marketing across industries

When it comes to seasonal marketing strategies for different industries, there's an obvious need to approach it differently to cater to their unique target audiences and customer behaviors. For instance, the retail industry may have a high demand for products during the holiday season, so their marketing efforts may focus on promotions and sales. On the other hand, the B2B industry may see a slowdown in business during the summer season when many decision-makers are on vacation. Their seasonal marketing efforts may focus on lead generation during other times of the year. The hospitality industry may see increased demand during the summer months, so their marketing efforts may focus on promoting travel packages and experiences during this time.

Overall, it's essential to understand your industry's unique characteristics and adjust your seasonal marketing strategy accordingly to maximize its effectiveness. Look at what your competitors are doing, get inspired by reading blog posts specific to your industry, assign yourself some creative thinking time, and find out how to develop successful seasonal marketing initiatives. We often think seasonal marketing is only for retail, but that's completely false!

## Chapter 3

# Creating a seasonal marketing strategy

In this section, we will introduce you to how you can create a seasonal marketing strategy steps-by-steps.

## Reflecting on your marketing approach

Before jumping into creating a seasonal marketing campaign, it's important to reflect on your overall seasonal strategy to ensure you're maximizing your efforts.

This involves:

- Identifying potential seasonal opportunities
- Conducting a market research to determine seasonal demand
- Brainstorming ideas for seasonal campaigns (while keeping gamification in mind)
- Reflecting on your budget/resources regarding developing seasonal campaigns

## 1. Setting goals and objectives

Now that you have reflected on your overall seasonal strategy, it is time to set clear goals and objectives. It is important to establish achievable goals that align with your business objectives and reflect the potential of the seasonal opportunity. Whether it is to increase sales, boost engagement, or build brand awareness, defining your goals will help you stay focused and make informed decisions throughout the year and seasons.

## 2. Creating a budget

Creating a budget for seasonal campaigns requires careful consideration of past performance and consumer research. It's essential to determine which seasons or holidays have generated the most engagement and revenue in the past and allocate a larger budget accordingly. On the other hand, those seasons or holidays that have had lackluster results may require less investment or a shift in strategy. By analyzing consumer behavior, market trends, and previous performance, you can create a budget that maximizes ROI and meets your marketing objectives..

### 3. Agreeing on specific campaigns and initiatives

After identifying potential seasonal opportunities and creating a budget, it's time to decide on specific campaigns and initiatives to be done. To have the desired impact, it's essential to create campaigns that captivate and engage your audience. Incorporating playable experiences and interactive content can help you do that! Playable experiences and interactive content are designed to directly engage the audience by inviting them to actively participate, rather than passively consume the content.

For example, you might create an Easter-themed game that rewards customers with discounts or prizes for completing certain actions or achieving specific goals. Or, you might develop a Halloween scavenger hunt that encourages customers to explore your store or website to find hidden pumpkins to unlock special offers. The possibilities are endless, so get creative and have fun with it!

### 4. Planning each campaign individually

When planning each individual seasonal campaign, it is vital to include specific details such as deadlines, responsible team members, and task ownership. This ensures that everyone involved in the project understands their role and is aware of the timeline for completion. Additionally, breaking the campaign down into smaller, manageable tasks makes it easier to track progress and adjust course as necessary. By creating a clear plan with defined responsibilities and timelines, you increase the likelihood of successful implementation and a positive outcome for your seasonal marketing strategy.

But, let's dive more into the specifics in the next section!

## Chapter 4

# How to create successful seasonal marketing campaigns that are playable?

By incorporating game mechanics such as fun, competition, challenges or rewards brands can create a fun and interactive experience for their customers that will keep them coming back for more.

There are 5 very important factors to consider to create result-driven seasonal campaigns that are playable and/or interactive.

## 1. Choose a specific goal for this campaign

When planning your seasonal marketing campaign, identify a specific goal that aligns with your overall strategy while also reflecting the theme of the season. For instance, summer is typically associated with fun and relaxation, making it an excellent opportunity to focus on increasing brand awareness through fun and engaging content. On the other hand, holidays such as Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Black Friday are all about driving sales and promoting special offers, perhaps with luck games.

By choosing a specific goal that aligns with the season, you can create a campaign that resonates with your target audience and drives measurable results for your business.

## 2. Decide on a game or interactive experience

Consider your target audience and the seasonal theme of your campaign when [selecting a game](#) or interactive experience. For example, an Easter-themed game that involves collecting virtual eggs can be a great fit for a spring campaign, while a Halloween scavenger hunt may be ideal for a fall campaign. Ensure that the game is challenging enough to keep your audience engaged but not too difficult to discourage participation. Remember, the game should be fun and align with your marketing goals to create a memorable and effective seasonal campaign.

## 3. Design the playable experience

When developing seasonal playable experiences, there are four important factors to take into account:

### 1. Encouraging participation

Motivating visitors to participate in your playable seasonal campaign is key to its success. Consider using elements of the game itself in the creative and messaging that showcase the fun and excitement, or specific game mechanic of the game. Use clear and concise instructions to guide visitors through the gameplay and ensure that the experience is intuitive and easy to navigate. Incorporate incentives, such as prizes or discounts, to motivate visitors to participate and share their experiences with others.

### 2. Incorporating the seasonal theme

When creating your playable seasonal campaign, it's also essential to incorporate the theme of the season into both the design and copy. Use colors, graphics, and imagery that evoke the feeling of the season, and make sure your messaging aligns with the season's values and traditions. For example, if creating a winter-themed game and depending on the geography of your audience, incorporate snowflakes, holiday-themed objects, or colors that represent the winter season. Use copy that incorporates holiday greetings, family time, and other seasonal sentiments.

### **3. Aligning messaging with marketing objectives**

While a well-crafted seasonal game is important, it's not the only consideration. It's common for customers to focus on creating amazing playable experiences but forget their overall marketing goals. Instead of designing the game around the goal, they design the game first and then modify it to fit the objectives, which is not the ideal approach. Whether it's increasing brand awareness, driving sales, or fostering customer loyalty, the messaging, and the user journey should align with your objectives.

### **4. Implementing seasonal promotions and offers**

Seasonal promotions and offers are a crucial component of any successful playable seasonal experience. By offering promotions and deals that are specifically tied to a particular season or holiday, brands can tap into the sense of excitement and urgency that consumers often feel during these times.

For example, offering a limited-time discount on summer clothing in the weeks leading up to the Fourth of July can create a sense of anticipation and encourage shoppers to make a purchase before the promotion ends. Remember to integrate your discounts and offers into your games, e.g., having a [wheel-of-fortune](#) that gives discounts, or having a large prize for all the participants in your [snake game](#).

## 4. Choosing the right channels to promote your playable experience

Choosing the right channels to promote your seasonal playable campaigns is key to ensuring that your target audience is engaged and willing to participate. Consider using social media platforms like Instagram or TikTok to visually showcase your playable experiences for a Halloween or Easter-themed campaign. Email marketing can also be a great way to send daily reminders for your online advent calendars.

In other words, the right channels really depend on your playable experience and your target audience. So, make sure to research which channels your target audience is most active on during a particular season, and optimize your messaging and content accordingly to maximize engagement.

## 5. Measuring the success of the campaign

Evaluating the success of your playable seasonal campaigns is crucial to understanding what works best for your brand and improving future campaigns. When measuring the performance of your playable campaigns, you should consider metrics such as user engagement, participation rates, and game completion rates. You can also gather customer feedback and analyze social media metrics to gain insights into the impact of your campaigns.

A/B testing is also a valuable tool to compare different playable and non-playable campaigns and determine which one resonates better with your audience. By analyzing the performance of your playable seasonal campaigns, you can identify areas for improvement and create a more data-driven budget for the next year.

## 10 common mistakes to avoid in seasonal playable marketing

At Playable, we have seen common mistakes made by customers throughout the years when implementing gamified seasonal campaigns. Here are the most common ones:

1. Choosing the wrong [type of games for your marketing goals](#)
2. Forgetting to theme the game around the season or holiday
3. Focusing too much on the game and neglecting the overall message of the campaign
4. Focusing only on the game and season, forgetting about your brand and brand awareness.
5. Making the game too complex or difficult for the target audience
6. Failing to test the game thoroughly before launching
7. Not providing enough incentives or rewards for players
8. Ignoring accessibility and making the game exclusive to certain devices or platforms
9. Forgetting to [promote the game](#) and make it easy to find for the target audience
10. Neglecting to [measure and analyze the effectiveness of the game](#) in achieving marketing goals.

Planning your campaigns is essential to avoid these mistakes!



## Chapter 5

# Examples of seasonal playable campaigns from real brands

Below are some examples of successful playable campaigns from real brands that demonstrate how a well-crafted and well-thought-out playable experience can generate engagement, increase brand awareness, and drive sales.

## Flying home for Christmas - Ekstra Bladet

[The Christmas campaign](#) 'Flying home for Christmas' by the airline DAT, created in the Playable platform by Ekstra Bladet and featured on the front page of their online newspaper, offered daily chances to win plane tickets home throughout December.

This seasonally-themed campaign not only engaged potential customers in a fun and interactive way, but also helped DAT to gain brand recognition and valuable email permissions for building customer loyalty.

**120.000**

clicks in 24 days

**00:57**

seconds per visit

**35,4%**

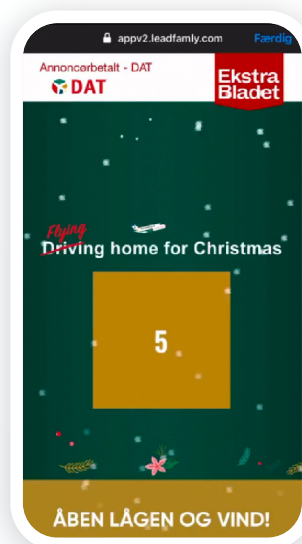
conversion rate

**42,000**

registration

**9,300**

unique registration



**Ekstra  
Bladet**

[Read the full Ekstra Bladet story](#)

## With the team - Carlsberg

Carlsberg, the active football sponsor of the Danish National team, seized the opportunity of the Euro2020 football championship, which was partly held in Denmark, to run a [summer campaign called “With the Team”](#). The campaign had a specific summer event focus and included a tactical component called “Win with the team” which invited consumers to buy a limited edition Carlsberg can and check the code for a chance to win Denmark fan merchandise.

**2x**

higher redemption rate

**1,500%**

increase in website traffic

**2.5x**

more time spent on the website per visit



**Carlsberg**  
Group

[Read the full Carlsberg story](#)

## Advent Calendar - Legoland

LEGOLAND Billund launched [a Christmas campaign](#) that revolved around a daily Advent Calendar. The theme park had several motivations for creating this seasonal initiative. Firstly, GDPR regulations had impacted their subscriber database, and they saw this as a fun way to regain permissions and gather subscriber information. Additionally, since the resort is closed from November to March, they wanted to create awareness and remain top-of-mind during the low season. Finally, they also aimed to provide a special experience for loyal and happy customers during the festive season.

This is a great example of how you can take advantage of seasonality in your marketing initiatives.

**30,000**  
newsletter sign-ups

**66%**  
more website users

**680,000**  
views on the video

**42,000**  
registrations

**2+ millions**  
in organic Facebook reaches



[Read the full Ekstra Bladet story](#)

## Pulled Pork Taco campaign - Danish Crown Foods

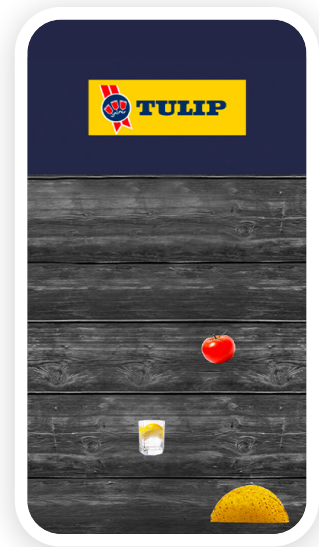
Danish Crown Foods utilized gamification to launch one of Tulip's new products in Norway during the summer vacation season. They created a [Drop Game campaign](#) featuring the necessary ingredients for tacos, allowing players to collect items needed for making pulled pork tacos in a fun and engaging way. The campaign successfully linked to relevant recipes, resulting in a small universe centered around the new product.

**04:46**

minutes average engagement time

**7,000**

unique participants



[Read the full Tulip story](#)

## Summer Spot the difference - Aldi Denmark

ALDI Denmark created a [seasonal summer campaign](#) to engage and challenge their audience with a Spot The Difference game. They used their in-house graphic designer to create the graphics and quickly launched the game on the Playable platform. ALDI's Summer campaign resulted in high engagement time, a high conversion rate, and positive interactions with their audience. They offered a prize that was perfect for the season: a big bag of ALDI ice cream, which winners could pick up in-store.

**15,000**  
visitors

**90 sec**  
engagement time

**74,2%**  
engagement rate

**Godt gået!**  
**Du fandt de**  
**5 fejl**

For at få et lod i konkurrencen, bedes du udfylde nedenstående felt:

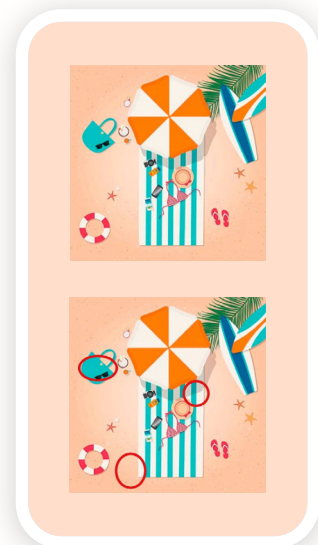
Navn \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Læs og accepter vores betingelser

**Gem**

Du kan læse konkurrencebetingelserne [her](#).



[Read the full Aldi story](#)

## Conclusion

Seasonal marketing campaigns provide a great opportunity to implement gamification strategies and engage with your audience in a fun and interactive way. While gamification has become an increasingly popular marketing strategy, it's important to remember that its success relies on effective execution.

At Playable, we specialize in creating playable experiences that drive engagement, increase conversions, and build customer loyalty. We work with brands of all sizes and industries to develop gamification campaigns that align with their marketing goals.

If you're interested in exploring gamification with your seasonal marketing campaigns or want to learn more about how gamification can benefit your business, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at Playable. We're excited to hear from you and help you develop a successful gamification strategy.

# Get in touch

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