

## Which Is the Trick and Which Is the Treat?



CANDY



MAKEUP &  
COSTUMES



GREETING  
CARDS



SAFETY



COUGH &  
COLD

**Are we tricking ourselves by holding onto old seasonal habits?** Sometimes it's hard to let go of the old "candy and costumes" Halloween seasonal set. It's time to take a good look at the customer traffic and revenue that Halloween brings into your store – script counts do not go up because you carry candy and costumes. Ask yourself: do costumes and candy make me money? Consider your cost, freight, and the amount discounted post-holiday. Do these seasonal items fill a need and keep the customers out of your competition's stores? Would candy sales suffer if you didn't sell costumes?

If you said no to all of the questions above, then **it's time to rethink the holiday**. For example, consider featuring makeup, makeup remover, hairspray, and dark-colored nail polishes for Halloween. With those items, there's no need for seasonal packaging or a discount on Nov. 1.

**How about Halloween greeting cards?** If you have guaranteed sales and return privileges with your card vendor, then all you need to be concerned with is the space they take up. If there are no return privileges, then run the numbers: can you afford the dollar and time investment?

**Safety is on everyone's minds.** Makeup is safer than a mask that can easily hinder vision. Monsters and zombies are still popular, and those costumes require a lot of makeup. An affordable flashlight counter display will do well at Halloween and during the long storm season. The best part? No seasonal packaging necessary. (Add a sign: "Treats in one hand and a flashlight in the other makes for a safer Halloween.")

Then there are the **forgotten over-the-counter sales**. With trick-or-treating comes a spike in coughs and colds. Be ready to offer children's cough & cold relief. Cross-merchandise children's toothbrushes in your cough & cold section. A sign idea for your display: "Treat them good, but trick them better with at least one new toothbrush."

If you have the numbers and the reasons point to cutting back or eliminating seasonal Halloween items, then do it now! Put the items on sale today. Don't worry about training your customers to wait for a Halloween sale next year – there won't be one. The one exception: **If you invested in Halloween seasonal candy, keep that at regular price until closing on Oct. 31**, but put everything else on sale. There is a good chance you will sell more candy with the noncandy items on sale as a draw.

For a few stores, it will be time to say bye bye and boohoo to Halloween seasonal items. For others, it remains a changing revenue stream. Just be clear where your store fits in.