

What Do Holidays Have in Common?

Discounts.

Carrying over holiday product the day after the event can be devastating to your return on investment. Many times the loss of revenue goes unnoticed. It's even worse if you panic and put holiday product on sale before the holiday event. Big box stores and chains are now making it a practice to discount before the event, and understandably that is tough to compete with. But remember, those types of stores buy product by containers; community pharmacies buy in cases. Buying by containers offers enough of a profit margin to allow for early discounting; buying by cases does not. Take Halloween candy, for example. The wholesale price of one case of Halloween Reese's Peanut Butter Pumpkins is barely 15 percent above the advertised retail sale price.



There is a better way to create holiday sales without going down the discount road, and it starts with being creative. Here are some ideas:

- **Resist buying the seasonal bags of snack size candy;** instead, buy the everyday fun size bags so you can enjoy a longer selling season. Tip: Candy for Christmas may be able to sell for New Year's and even Valentine's Day.
- **Wrap boxed chocolates on site.** Yes, you can unwrap the prewrapped candy, but only buy the pre-wrapped kind if you need the candy, not the wrap.
- **Pre-wrap fragrances,** leaving an unwrapped item as a sample.
- **Recognize the colors that sell for each holiday** and stock those instead of holiday-specific patterns. For example, gold, silver, red, green, and white-colored candles, wrap, ribbon, and bows sell well during Christmas and do not have to be discounted on Dec. 26.
- **Blank greeting cards are great substitutes** for that hard-to-find Valentine's Day card. Everyday money gift cards should be easily found for every holiday.
- **Plush animals (yuck) can get their holiday season look** with a simple add-on ribbon and/or a simple sign: "Take me home for [the holidays/Valentine's Day/etc]."
- **Grouping everyday items in baskets** or simply near each other can attract companion holiday seasonal sales. For example: red candles, massage oils, skin creams, and a plush bear makes for a big ring at the register. Everyday toys are great Christmas items; all you need to do is move them to the seasonal aisle.
- **Offer a free holiday box or gift wrapping** instead of discounting gift items. Gift wrapping or a free box costs less than a 25 percent after-Christmas sale.
- **Go where most have forgotten.** Feature a three-pack of the best multivitamin you have as a gift for good health. Consider promoting your pet section with a sign: "This holiday, don't forget your best friend!"
- **Group together everyday baby care items** for the holiday season and add a sign; it will do well, especially as gifts to new parents.

A few words about photo frames: When buying frames, consider buying less specific types of frames (such as Happy 25th Anniversary, To My Sister, To My Fishing Buddy, etc.). When limited in space and/or funds, offer frames that appeal to a broader audience. Quality 5 x 7", 8 x 10" or 11 x 14" wood, metal, or pewter non-specialty frames that come with a gift box will appeal to a large number of customers; plus, you do not have to wait for a very special occasion to happen before they have a chance to sell. Side note: Photo frames with pictures of people in the frame sell much better than frames featuring colored paper or text. Faces sell frames.

Today, grab a notepad and take 20 minutes to walk around your store and make note of items that can be featured for upcoming holidays. [Tweet me @NCPAGabe](#) and let me know what you find.