

The **consumer trends** that should shape advertising this christmas

By Dom Kozak, Head of Programmatic, JCDecaux UK



The next few months – the run up to Christmas – are set to be challenging for marketers. Against a backdrop of rising costs and economic uncertainty, predicting consumers' 2023 Christmas shopping habits is complex, but we've identified three trends that are good predictors of how the coming months will play out. For marketers, understanding these trends is key to ensuring their media mix and campaign strategy is up to date.

The early bird catches the worm

Supermarkets, such as Tesco, have caught on to the fact that Christmas is starting earlier than usual this year with [mince pies appearing on the shelves](#) in early September (despite the heatwave). While this particular push for Christmas pennies may not pay off, with some consumers frustrated and feeling like "it's a way of us getting us to spend more on Christmas," there is logic behind this early start.

In years gone by, Black Friday (which this year falls on 24 November), has acted as the unofficial kick off to Christmas shopping. However, with [Amazon's Prime Big Deal Days](#) landing

in October, consumers will almost certainly be spending on gifts way ahead of Black Friday.

This puts marketers in a precarious position. On the one hand, you don't want to put off consumers by putting out Christmas messaging too soon, but on the other hand, you don't want to miss out on valuable attention as consumers start to spend.

During this early phase of 2023's Christmas season reactivity is going to be key, which means buyers need to roll up their sleeves and get ready for some seasonal, data-driven test and learn. In programmatic digital out of home (pDOOH) this could be creative testing to see which variations of your ads resonate best with consumers on a

weekly basis as the general excitement over the holiday season builds. Or it could be implementing early campaigns in certain locations and measuring the impact this has on brand awareness, and consideration with a view to rolling out pDOOH on a larger scale with performance marketing-based messaging closer to December.

Gaining insights like these in September and October will put brands at an advantage over those that hold off until consumer spending starts to rise. By starting early, brands can place themselves front of mind, and have a much better picture of how consumers think and feel about their brand and products in today's climate.

Value not volume

Research indicates that this year consumers will be **'buying bigger'** with many consumers cutting back on smaller stocking filler-type gifts, instead opting for value not volume. The same research also shows that **sustainability** will be top-of-mind for consumers. Gifts that combine value, sentiment, and quality will be highly sought after.

Combined with a longer consideration phase this means that, for advertisers, getting promotional periods

and messaging right will be key. Programmatic DOOH provides marketers with the ultimate in flexibility and control, while high-quality screens enable brands to showcase products using motion and video creative.

Consumers will also find value outside of products themselves, with delivery costs, returns costs, and loyalty rewards being high on the list of factors that go into deciding what to buy and where to buy it from.

From a creative perspective, this poses a challenge of how to fit branding,

product imagery, calls to action, pricing, and other benefits into ads. This can be especially challenging in the vastly popular mobile space due to the smaller screen size. Larger formats found in OOH environments can help overcome the challenge and when coupled with programmatic buying techniques, provide brands with a quick, straightforward way to experiment with creative layouts. Additionally, brands can use live data sources to inform decisions such as which products to show where and when, and make sure any pricing shown in the ads is up to date.

The importance of closing the loop between online and offline

This year, many consumers will favour **in-store shopping** over online meaning that marketers need to focus more than ever on closing the loop between online and offline advertising. Marketers' tendency to plough budgets into online channels during times of high demand could result in serious missed opportunities. Savvy marketers will look to compliment online activity with carefully orchestrated offline activities. The benefits of this approach will last beyond Christmas too. Numerous studies, from companies such as Kantar, Talon, JCDcaux UK, and Clear Channel have shown that consumers like, and trust, OOH advertising more compared to online.

Planning, activating, measuring, and optimising online and offline advertising can be tricky, but thanks to advances in demand-side platform (DSP) technology marketers now have an uncomplicated way to overcome the challenges of the past. From an omnichannel perspective, working with a DSP that offers online and offline

capabilities enables advertisers to ensure that campaigns are timed to ensure that spend is optimised by channel according to when consumers are most active on specific devices, or most likely to be in specific locations, such as malls, cities, train stations, supermarkets, and even airports. Furthermore, the ability to measure both online and offline metrics, such as footfall and sales, across all channels gives marketers the ability to evaluate all channels fairly, as well as see how each one contributes to the bigger picture, not just the final sale.

From a channel perspective, buying DOOH programmatically via a DSP enables brands to adjust targeting and messaging based on real-time first party customer or stock information, incorporate location into messaging for increased contextual relevance, and bid for the most efficient impressions for the target audience.

This combination of a consistent, single point of omnichannel buying, measurement, and optimisation gives longevity to brands' omnichannel buying through overcoming many of the challenges associated with continued fragmentation of consumers' media consumption and buying habits.

How to crack Christmas 2023

With marketers yet again finding themselves in uncharted territory and facing their own financial pressures, agility, precision, and measurement are going to be key over the coming months. The key things to remember about Christmas 2023 are:

1. **Amazon's Prime Big Deal Days** in October will kick-start Christmas shopping
2. There will be a greater focus on **value not volume** and **'buying bigger'**
3. Many consumers will favour **in-store shopping** over online

Large-scale channels that offer maximum flexibility, such as programmatic digital out of home (pDOOH), can be a lifeline for marketers during tumultuous times like these. The flexibility to launch and pause in real-time, scale spending up or down at will, and swap creatives on the fly will be of huge benefit to marketers as they seek to maximise their share of Christmas spending. The ability to measure performance across multiple channels, both online and offline, will be key and marketers would be wise to look to attention to achieve this combined with an omnichannel, programmatic approach ■