HIGH STREETS MATTER

Christmas Guide for Retailers

This guide offers a comprehensive set of practical tips and ready-to-use resources designed to help shopkeepers optimise their holiday operations, marketing, in-store experience, and pricing strategies to boost sales and footfall during the festive season.

- **Operational and digital essentials:** Businesses should prominently publish special holiday hours across platforms, update click & collect cut-off times, communicate clear returns policies, brief staff on holiday FAQs, and create dedicated Christmas gifting pages and Google posts to inform and engage customers effectively. Accessibility and gift wrap upsells are also key considerations.

- **Store experience and merchandising:** Creating interactive "Try & Discover" counters, safe tastings with allergen info, quick gift fixtures by price point, and festive sensory elements like scent and soundscapes enhance customer engagement. Window displays should tell a clear story with focal products and calls to action, while selfie spots and collaborations with neighbouring shops can drive foot traffic.

- **Marketing and promotional strategies:** Running VIP evenings, 12 Days of Christmas campaigns, user-generated content contests, and micro-events like maker pop-ups help increase footfall. Pricing tactics include good-better-best ladders, value bundles, threshold offers, and strategic markdowns while maintaining margin guardrails.

Planning and measurement: A six-week countdown checklist guides timely preparation from stock ordering to staff briefing and VIP events. Key performance indicators such as footfall, conversion rates, average order value, and voucher redemptions should be tracked daily to evaluate success and inform future seasons. Ready-to-use social captions, email subject lines, and signage copy support efficient marketing.

The Top 30 Christmas Tips (at-a-glance)

Operational & Digital "Must-Dos"

1. Publish Christmas & New Year hours everywhere (Google Business Profile "Special hours"; Apple Maps/ Business Connect; website header/ footer; Facebook/ Instagram bios; in-store window & till notices).
2. Add 'Special Hours' for key dates (late-night shopping, Christmas Eve, Boxing Day, New Year's Eve).
3. Pin "What's On for Christmas" to the top of social profiles (include late-night dates, parking/ pick-up, last posting dates, gift-wrap and returns).
4. Update Click & Collect cut-off times and post them on product pages, checkout and order confirmations.
5. Create a 2-line 'Returns & Exchanges' policy for gifts (clear, friendly; extended to mid-Jan if feasible).
6. Brief the team on "holiday FAQs" (eg gift cards, popular lines, sizes, stock checks, allergen info for samples and queue etiquette).
7. Add a "Gift Wrap/ Ready-to-Gift" upsell at till and checkout.
8. Add a 'Christmas Gifting' landing page (online) with bundles, top sellers and last-chance boxes.
9. Set Google Posts for events/ offers (eg 12-day countdown, late-night shopping, tastings and VIP night).
10. Check accessibility (eg clear aisles, portable ramp if applicable, seating for carers, card readers reachable and hearing-friendly environment).
11. Ensure Gift Vouchers are promoted, easy to shop and part of your gift messaging.

Store Experience & Merchandising

12. Create a “Try & Discover” counter (eg experiences, demos, smells, textures and capture quick preferences).
13. Run safe tastings (include clear allergen signage; staff trained; record ingredients and avoid cross-contamination).
14. Design a “Gift in 60 seconds” fixture (pre-bundled gifts by price point: £10 / £20 / £50).
15. Z-flow layout to funnel traffic past “wow” tables; keep best-sellers at hand level.
16. Create a “Secret Santa” bay with cheeky/ value picks and gift card prompts.
17. Scent + soundscape (consistent, not overpowering; time-based playlists).
18. Window = story > product > price (big headline, 3 focal products, one Call To Action).
19. Selfie spot or window trail with neighbouring shops (QR to map; prize draw).
20. Apply shop zoning for optimal experience (see High Streets Matter guide).

Marketing that Drives Footfall

21. Neighbourhood collabs (stamp trail; spend-&-save across two stores; “Golden Hour” 4–6 pm offers).
22. VIP evening (limited RSVPs; 10% bounce-back voucher for Jan).
23. 12 Days of Christmas (daily post + in-store perk; keep consistent brand frame).
24. Micro-events (author signings, maker pop-ups, live wrapping demos).
25. Town calendar sync (align with market dates, switch-on, choir nights; cross-post via council/BID pages).

Pricing & Promotions (protect margin)

26. Good-Better-Best ladders on hero categories (anchor with a premium decoy).

27. Bundle to add value (save 15% vs. items alone; maintain margin using high-GM add-ons).
28. Threshold offers (“Free gift at £40+”; “Spend £60—£10 Jan voucher”).
29. ‘Attachers’ (gift wrap, cards, batteries, refills) merchandise adjacent to gifts.
30. Markdown with purpose (clear slow movers early; re-ticket to “2 for £X” to lift units per transaction).

Six-Week Countdown (from early November)
Week -6: Plan & order stock, signage, staffing.
Week -5: Build window concept, photograph hero bundles.
Week -4: Publish festive hours, announce VIP night.
Week -3: Launch gift bay, schedule content.
Week -2: Staff briefing, print vouchers, test queue plan.
Week -1: VIP night, stock top-ups, sampling check.

Christmas Week:
Daily Google Post, tidy displays and Ready-to-use Assets.

Measurement:
Track daily: Footfall, Conversion %, AOV, UPT, attachers sold email sign-ups, voucher redemptions.

Review sell-through and margin post-season.

Have fun!