

Turn Your Seasonal Marketing Plan Green Year-Round

4 Killer Strategies Alcoholic Beverage Marketers Need To Know





This guide was designed to help marketers in the alcoholic beverage market better understand and optimize for seasonality and its influence on sales and marketing. It will give you a fresh perspective on seasonality, using examples from thousands of models Keen Decision Systems has built and optimized for top consumer brands. These real-world examples will help you see how a deeper understanding of seasonality can help you increase marketing's contribution in every season.

Lastly and most importantly, we'll give you four killer strategies to optimize your seasonal marketing strategy now to improve profitability.

It's Five O'Clock Somewhere

Seasonal marketing refers to fluctuations in consumer buying patterns based on time of year. For alcoholic beverage brands summer and holidays are the most obvious peak sales seasons.

The truth is brands are influenced by other types of seasonality that are less obvious as well. The rise of at-home consumption for bev/al and meals will cultivate new "occasions" around cooking and snacking for promotions and timing tied to meal pairing, home-tending, recipe integration and happy-hour snacking, according to a [report by Advantage Solutions](#).

In theory, seasonal marketing helps capitalize on times of year when consumers are most likely to purchase your product. But looking beyond the calendar to predict revenue lift across channels and weeks of your plan can uncover opportunities to increase marketing returns with a different approach to seasonal marketing.

The first thing you'll want to do is analyze your annual sales cycle and look for seasonal, cyclical spending patterns. Here are some places to start.



1. **Review web analytics.** An uptick in visitors during specific weeks or months can reveal the ups and downs of your brand's seasons.
2. **Understand seasonal keyword trends.** Google Trends is a great resource for exploring which keywords trend during particular times of year. The following screenshot shows the trending analytics for the keyword phrase, "sunglasses for babies" from June 2020 to June 2021.



Traffic for this keyword phrase spiked in early April — not during the summer. This suggests that many consumers who want sunglasses for their babies start to look for them before summer even begins.

3. **Monitor fluctuations in advertising rates.** Online advertising costs increase and decrease over the course of the year in response to supply and demand. Understanding these cycles also can help you understand changes in the cost of marketing during various weeks.





The Seasonal Impacts On These Products May Surprise You

Here are some examples from other industries of brands that effectively identified and leveraged their seasonal marketing plans to drive more growth.

How Eckrich Keeps Meat Fresh

The marketing team at Eckrich modeled its plan on Keen's solution and learned they overinvested during its peak season of August to November, and had room to profitably increase investment during non-peak months.



"It can be intimidating for marketers to consider shifting dollars out of their peak sales period, no matter what the data is telling you," Keen Client Success Manager Brandon Crowling explains. "We walk our clients through how to balance the models' future-focused recommendations with their risk tolerance, and often recommend testing the opportunity with a small re-allocation first before making major changes."

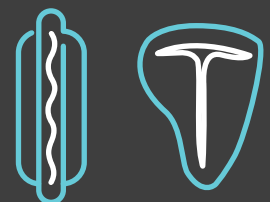
After shifting more spend into non-peak months, Eckrich discovered sales continued after the season was over, enabling the brand to sustain sales year-round. Turns out the seasonal marketing cycle wasn't the same as the seasonal sales cycle.

For Nathan's Famous, It's Dogs Year-Round

When do you eat hot dogs? If you're like most Americans you buy them from Memorial Day to Labor Day, with a few picnics, baseball games and the Fourth of July thrown in.



That's the seasonal spike that Nathan's Famous built its marketing plan on as well. Fireworks erupted when Keen's scenarios showed additional revenue opportunities in their off months. Read the complete case study [here](#).



Seafood Brand Makes Big Catch After Lent

With all the health benefits associated with fish, sales have grown over the past few years. Yet, purveyors of seafood products continue to see an undeniable spike during the six weeks of Lent when nearly 70 million U.S. Catholics keep meatless Fridays.

Keen's model showed one such brand that there was plenty of fishing to be done after Easter. In fact Keen's models showed that demand was fairly consistent year-round. The team ran scenarios that recommended an always-on media strategy to sustain awareness and support sales.

Ice Cream Brand Scoops It On During Cooler Months

An ice cream maker commits 100 percent of its marketing budget from May through September. What they didn't realize was that, because people naturally buy ice cream during warmer months, they could reduce their marketing spend without melting their sales volume.

They adapted their plan, guided by Keen's scenarios. Continuing to market year-round means the brand is now reminding consumers to enjoy ice cream any time, whether in the comfort of their climate-controlled homes or while wintering in warmer climates.



4 Killer Ideas To Make The Most Of Your Seasonal Marketing



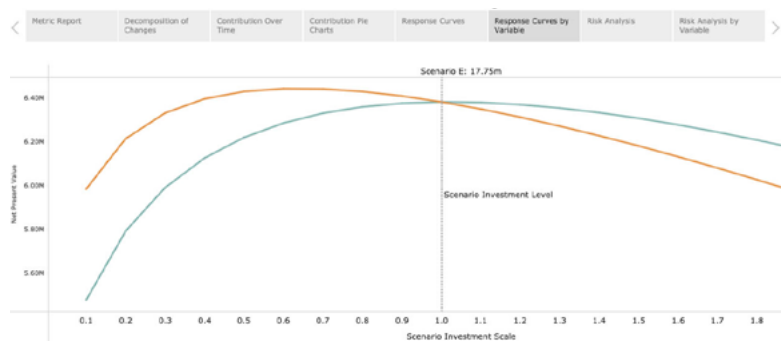
Now at last we're here. This is the part where we tell you how to convert your new knowledge into action. Here are four simple steps you can take now to optimize your seasonal marketing strategy.

1. Use short-term seasonal tactics in-season.

Short-term tactics allow you to drive sales over a specific time period of a few weeks or months by creating a sense of urgency and prompting consumers to take immediate action. These low-cost, short duration tactics are particularly valuable to seasonal marketing campaigns.

2. Adjust your peak spend to the point of diminishing return.

During peak season there is a point where each additional dollar you invest returns less than one dollar. When you know where that point is you can adapt your plan to spend up to that level for each channel and week of your plan, or knowingly choose to invest past that point for a lower, but continued lift.



This is the type of calculation Keen's Bayesian predictive modeling generates to inform the scenarios that marketers use to "war game" their channel mix and timing.



3. Push the perimeter of your peak season.

While you can land sales year-round, it is important to know which season(s) will yield the highest return for your brand. Once you pinpoint when your brand is in season, you can begin building and nurturing sales beyond peak.

After all, the buyer's journey begins before intent and purchase. Said another way, for each consumer product there is a timeframe of varying length during which consumers become aware of their need and consider their purchase options before making that purchase.

An easy way to start is to extend each end of your peak curve by a few weeks, activating marketing before the peak and continuing it after it wanes to help extend and sustain the buying cycle.

4. Don't go dark.

No matter how cyclical your buying cycle is, you should maintain marketing activity year-round for two reasons.

As long as product is available, marketing support helps build awareness and stimulate sales.

Further, your brand's equity relies on continually earning consumer mindshare. When you go dark, brand equity decays and your cost of marketing long-term will increase.



How One Brand Keeps Car Care Sales Shiny Year Round

To close, let's take a look at an example of a seasonal consumer product that wanted to understand how to adapt its marketing spend around its seasonal sales cycle, which peaks during summer.

The brand team used Keen's platform to model the past two years of marketing plans, and then ran scenarios to see what a year-round spend might look like.

This chart shows the brand's cyclical marketing spend in 2020 and 2021 alongside the "always on" scenario. Keen's modeling suggested the same budget could deliver \$3 million more in revenue to the business.



The team decided to support its brand year-round with a lower-level digital marketing campaign, which drove more sales and happier customers.

Conclusion

Effective seasonal marketing planning decisions rely on your ability to understand your seasonal cycles and adapt your plan to invest profitably across both high and low sales cycles.

Thinking through these four strategies will help you take your plan forward and begin to drive more lift, more consistently year round.

If you want to take the next step and get a deeper understanding of where your profit threshold is across each channel and week of your plan, that's exactly the type of complex calculations and modeling that technology like Keen's was created to deliver.

Swing by KeenDS.com to continue learning or [book a demo](#) today.