



2024 HOLIDAY SEASON FORECAST

# Win Big This Holiday Season:

**Cutting-Edge TV Ad Strategies,  
AI Power, and Pro Tips**

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## Introduction: “Hard 8” or crazy sprint

**Crowds storm stores in the first minutes of Black Friday openings – we’ve all seen these videos online.** Just as each shopper tries to snag the best deals, every advertiser during the holiday season aims to capture their share of the audience to sell their products because time is very limited.

**So-called “Hard 8”** (weeks between Halloween and Christmas) are becoming hard rush, because the last week of November and the four weeks of December, can account for up to 70% of a retailer's annual profits. And the winners are always those who prepare in advance and follow a well-thought-out strategy.



# How to predict in an unpredictable world?

For advertisers, there are never easy times. Keeping a pulse on the market and adapting communications to a changing world has always been necessary. However, it's undeniable that in the past few years, "black swan" events —rare and unpredictable occurrences that have a significant impact — have occurred with unprecedented frequency. Sometimes, changes have to be made on the fly. But "black swans" aren't always negative phenomena; some, like the growth of AI, have become our greatest allies.

**In this e-book, we share best practices for creating successful holiday campaigns.** You will find insights into predicting customer behavior, planning early and strategically, leveraging AI, and navigating the decline of linear TV. We'll also cover key points from industry experts to help you craft a robust TV ad strategy.

**What else can help us create **successful holiday campaigns**? Let's dive in and explore.**







*Understanding the life stage of consumers — whether they're grandparents, parents, newlyweds, or singles — is crucial. There are multiple personas during the holiday season, each with different purchasing behaviors.*



## **Dave Morgan**

**Executive Chairman  
at Simulmedia.**

Dave Morgan also points out that in recent years, travel-related gifts, such as **airline tickets and hotel rooms, have surpassed traditional holiday gifts like fashion and jewelry.** This shift is driven by parents and grandparents who gift travel experiences to their children and grandchildren, allowing the whole family to celebrate together in places like The Villages in Florida.

# Pay close attention

to customer **behavior**  
and seasonal **trends**

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## Popular gifts

**Retail, fashion, and new gadgets remain significant. Financial services are growing, with new accounts and loans increasing. Car purchases also see a boost.**

People will buy—that's for sure. However, what is more important for publishers and marketers is understanding how consumers will decide what to buy and what will impact their decisions during the 2024 holiday season.







Economic adjustments, such as changes in interest rates (The Federal Reserve *is expected to cut rates by 0.25-0.50% in September 2024; rates have been at its highest levels in 23 years since July 2023*), may influence consumer spending.

The U.S. job market showed signs of strain with a disappointing July hiring report, where *unemployment rose to 4.3%, the highest in three years*. The weak jobs data has triggered concerns about a potential recession, despite the Federal Reserve's efforts to stabilize the economy by maintaining high interest rates.

While the slowdown in job growth could lead to economic challenges, it will prompt the Fed to lower interest rates more aggressively, offering some relief to consumers with lower borrowing costs on mortgages and credit cards.

**For advertisers, this means an even fiercer fight for every consumer dollar.**

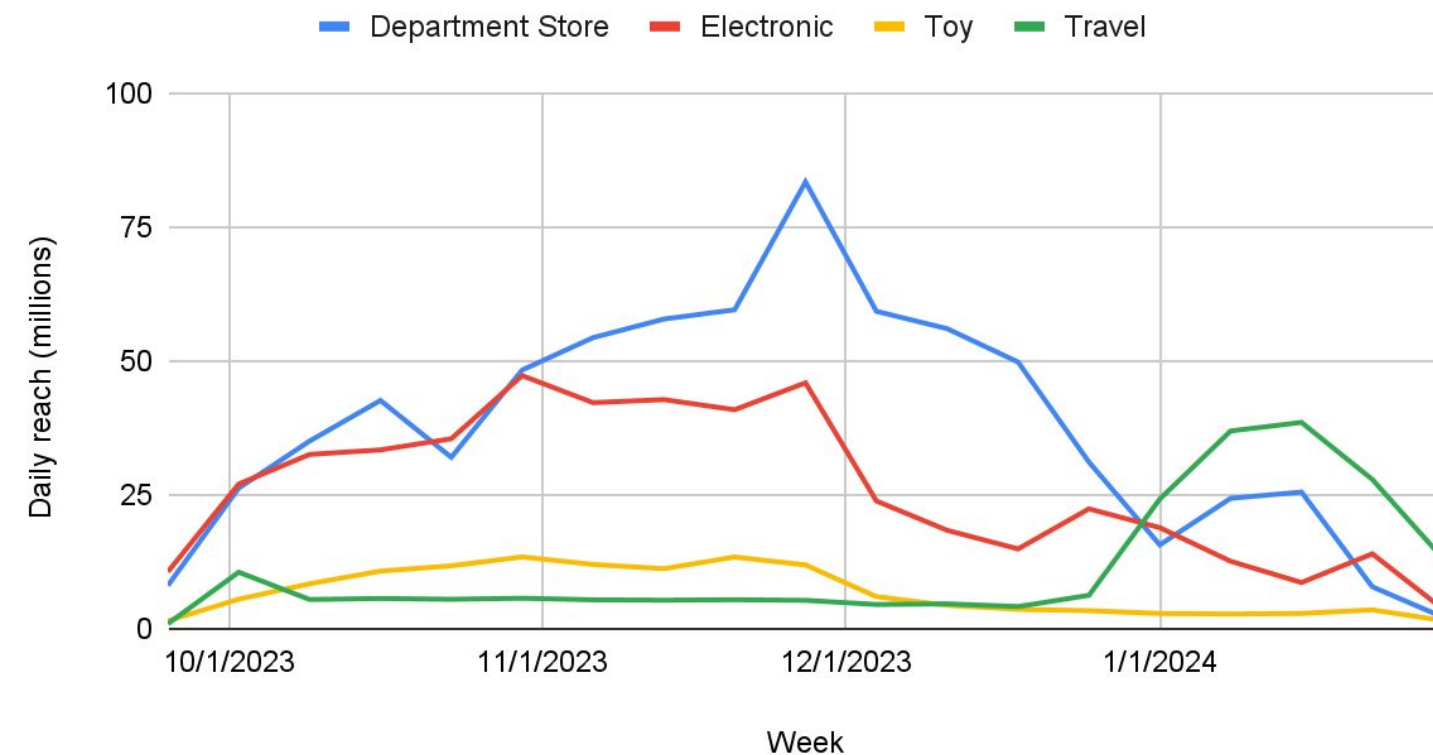


# More than one makes the decision

Reaching all family members is crucial when it comes to products like toys.

Targeted advertising plays a significant role here. While mass retailers may have broader brand recognition, targeted campaigns are essential for specific products or brands aiming to stand out during the holiday rush.

Daily reach by vertical across holiday and post-holiday period



## Chart Insights

- Department Stores** reach towers above other verticals. They begin ramping up their advertising in October, hitting a peak around Thanksgiving week.
- Electronics** experience a sharp increase in reach in October, stays somewhat steady until Cyber Monday week, and sees moderate decline throughout December.
- Toys** campaigns don't reach as many consumers as other verticals, but ramps up in October and stays steady throughout November.
- Travel** remains relatively low throughout the holiday period, but ramps up immediately during the final week of December.




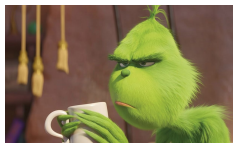






# Do Strategic Planning Early and Work With Brand Awareness

Book ad spots early to avoid high demand and ensure visibility during peak shopping times. Due to the elections, there may be limited ad spots at higher prices, so act with urgency to secure budgets and October and early November placements early, avoiding missed opportunities.

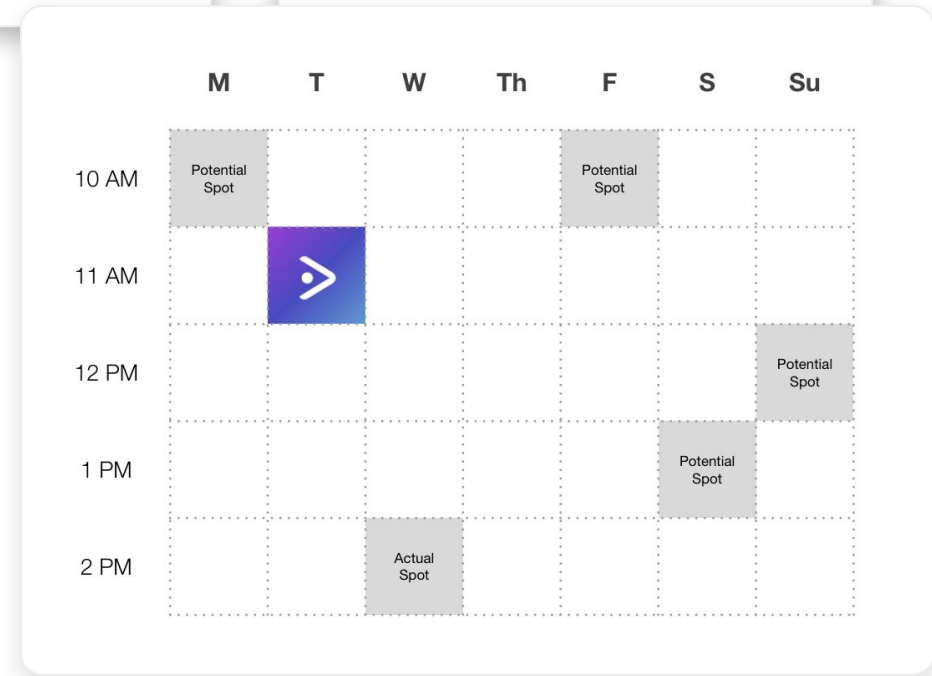
Track prime-time slots and popular shows to inform brands about scarcity and booking urgency. This helps close deals and secure desired content for ads.

Start campaigns earlier and extend them later during the holiday season to build brand awareness. This enhances direct response campaigns closer to key events like Black Friday.

Programs	Impressions
 Home Alone	690K
 Elf	550K
 Four Christmases	490K
 The Grinch	325K

Publishers	Reach
 Paramount	460K
 Hulu	445K
 Hallmark	230K
 NBC	215K

Brand awareness levels vary. **Established brands need to balance priming the audience with maintaining recency during the holiday season.** Simulmedia's TV+ platform ensures consistent weekly ad reach, maximizing recall during decision-making.

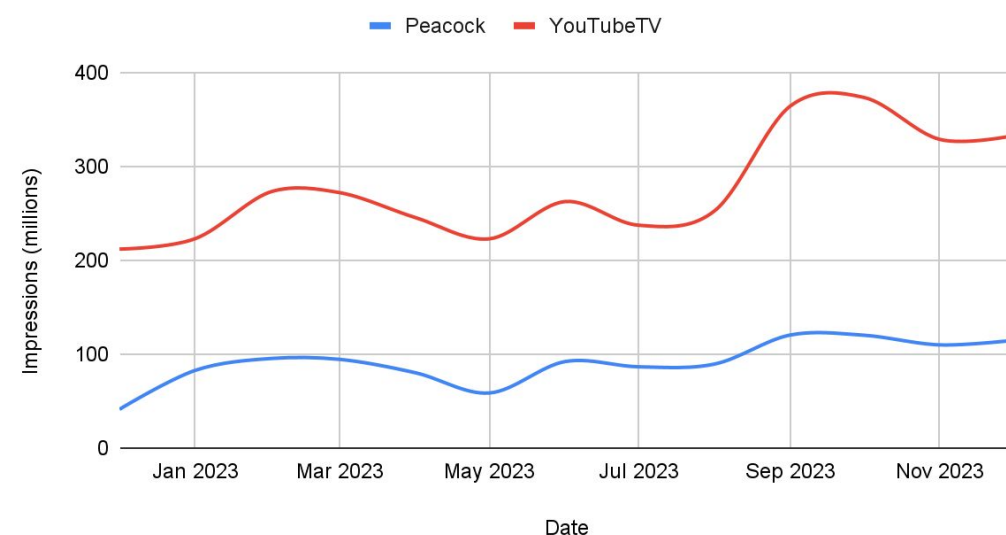




## Insights from Streaming and Linear Apps

The two charts highlight the importance of understanding audience behavior across different platforms, both streaming and linear.

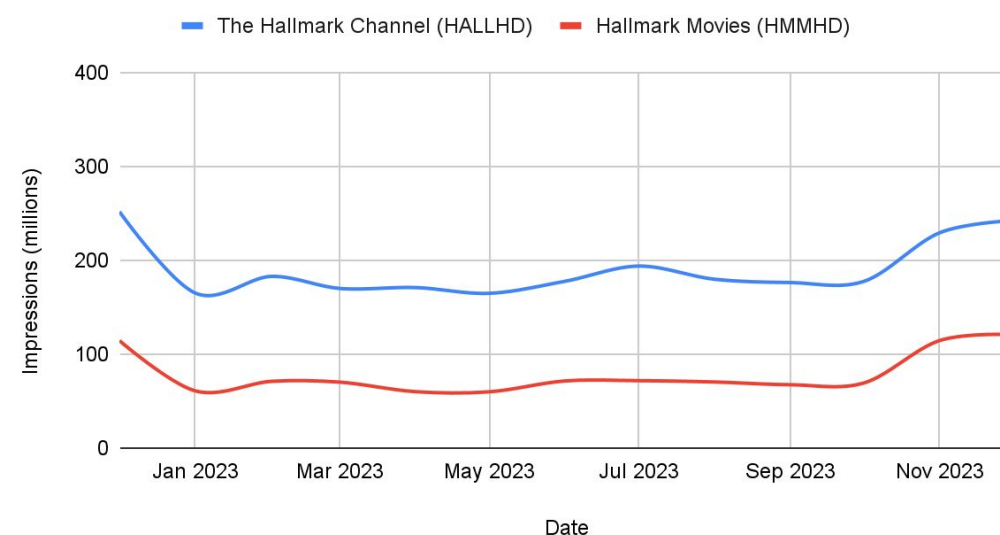
Peacock vs YouTubeTV streaming viewership for 2023



### Streaming Apps: *Peacock and YouTube TV*

The first chart shows impressions for Peacock and YouTube TV. Both YouTube TV and Peacock are streaming apps, but it's noteworthy that YouTube TV (a vMVPD) saw a more significant bump in end-of-year viewership. Yes, streaming has been gaining more and more ground during the holiday season, but the gains favor specific channels more so than others.

Hallmark Channel vs Movies linear viewership for 2023



### Linear Apps: *Hallmark Channel and Hallmark Movies*

The second chart displays impressions for Hallmark Channel and Hallmark Movies. Despite a gradual decline, the Hallmark Channel still garners substantial impressions, particularly towards the end of the year. This trend underscores the continued relevance of linear TV, especially for reaching older demographics. Advertisers should secure prime-time slots on these channels early to ensure visibility and capitalize on high-demand periods during the holiday season.

**By booking campaigns in advance and understanding viewership trends across both streaming and linear platforms, brands can enhance their visibility during peak shopping times. This approach not only helps in building brand awareness but also ensures a balanced reach across diverse audience segments, maximizing the impact of holiday campaigns.**



## Leverage AI to make Holiday Season Advertising Efforts More Efficient

The question of whether AI can replace marketers is a hot topic. While it's tempting to imagine AI handling everything, the reality is more nuanced.

Take accountants: despite calculators, computers, Google Sheets, and various accounting software, accountants are still thriving. These tools have enhanced their capabilities rather than replaced them.

The same is true for AI in marketing. AI enhances day-to-day operations but isn't a direct creator of personalized experiences.

***The human touch—creativity, strategic thinking, and nuanced understanding of consumer behavior—remains irreplaceable.***



## For TV ad strategy, predicting and understanding consumer behavior is vital, and AI can help here.

For example, Coca-Cola targets people undergoing life stage changes, as they're more likely to consume more during these times.

*Coca-Cola's "Holidays Are Coming" video has been one of the most iconic Christmas ads for over 20 years.*

***But how can one find customers in that stage within a fragmented media landscape?*** AI can be leveraged to predict behaviors and tailor advertising accordingly using a data-driven platforms. **Marketers have options:**

- 1) Use platforms from companies like Warner Brothers Discovery and Disney, which optimize inventory with AI but are limited to their ecosystem.
- 2) Alternatively, marketers can use more holistic data-driven platforms like Simulmedia's, which target and find fragmented audiences by aggregating data across all publishers.

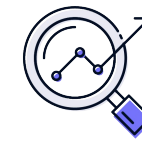


## How does AI help?



### Maximizing Campaign Efficiency

AI plans and executes campaigns to reach the right audience at optimal times, maximizing impact.



### Enhancing Data Analytics

AI analyzes data to enhance targeting strategies and inform better decision-making, tailoring messages to specific segments for improved effectiveness.



### Optimizing Campaigns

AI and machine learning find incremental reach and improve efficiency, giving companies a competitive edge.



### Vital Component of Modern TV Advertising Strategy

AI is crucial for modern TV advertising, enabling precise planning, enhancing analytics, and improving efficiency.



# Decline of linear TV and how brands should act

**Do you think linear TV is like a ghost town? Excluding it from your holiday ad strategy is a huge mistake that could cost you a lot of unearned profit.** Despite declining viewership, linear TV remains crucial in a comprehensive strategy, reaching a larger portion of the US population. While streaming TV is growing, linear TV still captures the lion's share in 2024.

***Linear TV delivers mass reach and immediate sales, making it indispensable for brands.*** Digital advertising offers better targeting and engagement, but linear TV's broad reach is unmatched.

The decline of linear TV is gradual, giving advertisers time to adapt. To maintain effective reach, it shouldn't be abandoned but included in a media strategy with CTV and digital channels.

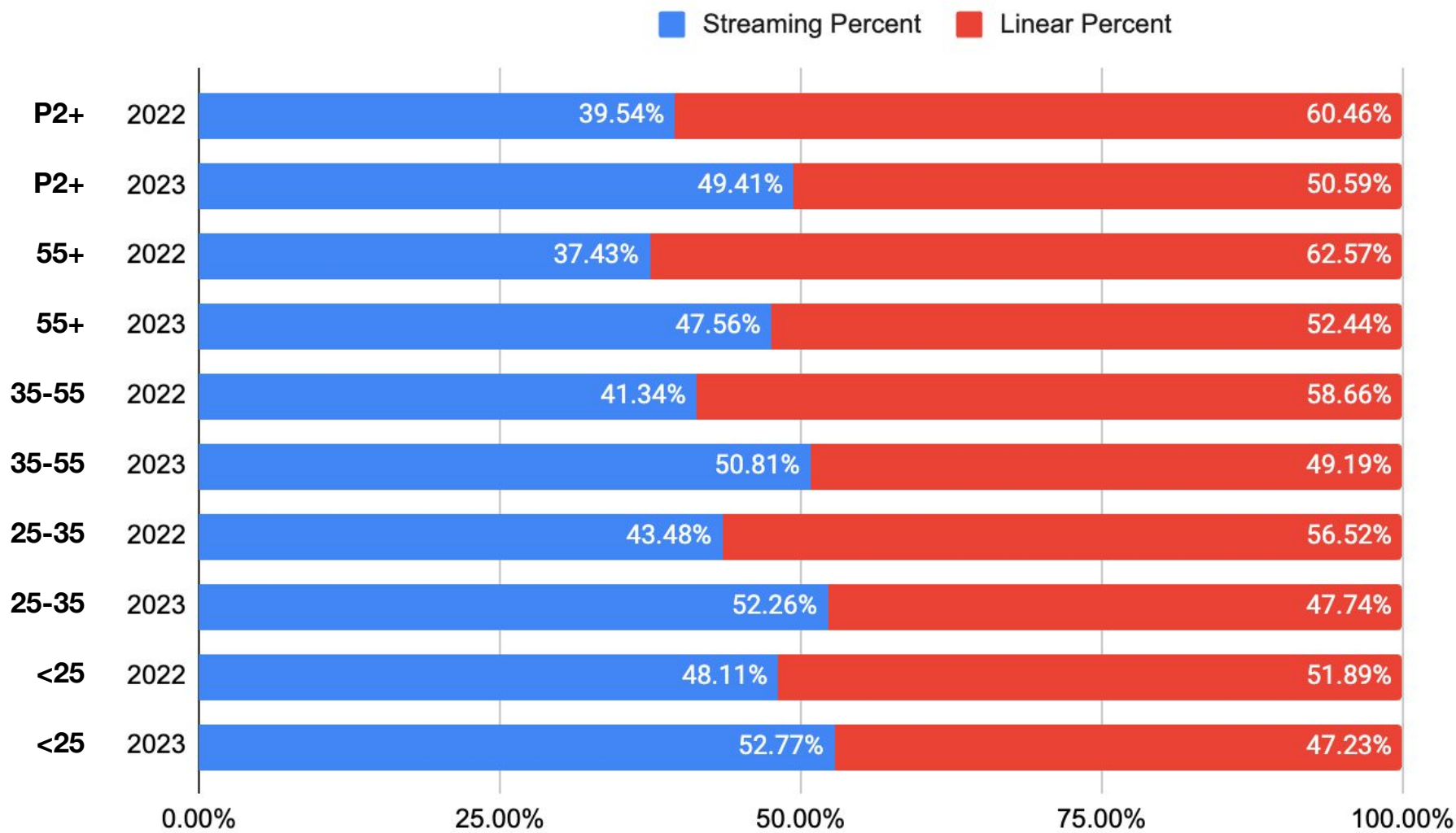
Linear TV is vital for reaching older demographics and maintaining brand presence. By integrating linear TV with other media strategies, brands like McDonald's can engage their target audiences.





This chart illustrates the channel distribution of viewership during holiday seasons across years, comparing the percentages of viewers on streaming platforms (blue) versus linear TV (red) across different age groups. This data is crucial in understanding the evolving landscape of media consumption and highlights the gradual shift towards streaming.

**Channel Distribution of viewership during holiday seasons across years**



**Key Insights**

- Increasing Streaming Viewership:** There is a noticeable increase in streaming viewership from 2022 to 2023 across all age groups, with the most significant rise among younger viewers (<25) and young adults (25-35).
- Persistent Linear TV Reach:** Despite the rise in streaming, linear TV still holds a substantial share, especially among older demographics (55+).
- Balanced Strategy Needed:** The data underscores the importance of a balanced media strategy that includes both streaming and linear TV to effectively reach a diverse audience.

This chart emphasizes the need for advertisers to maintain a presence on **both streaming and linear platforms to maximize reach and engagement during the holiday season.**





**We advocate for a balanced investment approach, ensuring both linear and digital channels are utilized effectively.** This allows brands to benefit from the broad reach of linear TV and the targeting and engagement capabilities of digital channels. Integrating linear TV with digital platforms creates seamless and effective campaigns that maximize reach and impact.

In summary, the decline of linear TV should not lead to its complete abandonment. Instead, it should be part of a diversified media strategy leveraging both linear and digital channels. ***This ensures holiday TV ad strategies are robust, flexible, and capable of reaching target audiences effectively across various platforms.***



# What should video advertising look like in 2024?

Here are some standout ads that have earned significant acclaim:

- [Booking.com featuring ft. Tina Fey, Glenn Close, Jane Krakowski, and Jack McBrayer](#)
- [Bradley & Gloria's Full Audition | T-Mobile 2024 Big Game Commercial](#)
- [Hellmann's Mayo Cat](#)

These ads exemplify current trends in TV advertising, featuring:

- **Humor:** Engaging audiences with a good laugh.
- **Relatable Storytelling:** Crafting narratives that viewers can connect with.
- **Celebrity Endorsements:** Leveraging star power to boost appeal.
- **Clear call-to-action:** Encouraging immediate consumer action.
- **Emphasizing Gender Equality:** Highlighting equal representation to resonate with a diverse audience

In 2024, the most successful TV ads have stolen the spotlight during major events like the Super Bowl, where brands pull out all the stops to captivate viewers.





# What should video advertising look like in 2024?



## Gender Equality

One crucial aspect of 2024 ads is their focus on gender equality. According to a report from "See Her," 85% of household purchase decisions in the US are made by women. Statistics show that women are more likely to buy products advertised with female representation. Therefore, ***focusing on media that promotes gender equality can improve message reception and effectiveness.***

## Ethical Advertising and Social Responsibility

This year, there's a notable shift toward ethical advertising, where brands promote social responsibility and sustainability. ***Consumers increasingly prefer brands that demonstrate ethical practices, enhancing brand loyalty and trust.***

## Technical Aspects

Planning for integrated marketing campaigns is essential. As viewers consume content across various platforms, ads must be designed for seamless integration across TV, social media, and digital channels. ***Consistent messaging and branding across these platforms can enhance visibility and trust.***

**Despite the focus on technology, creative storytelling remains paramount.** Advertisers must craft compelling narratives that resonate with viewers, as memorable campaigns can significantly impact brand perception.



# When to start?

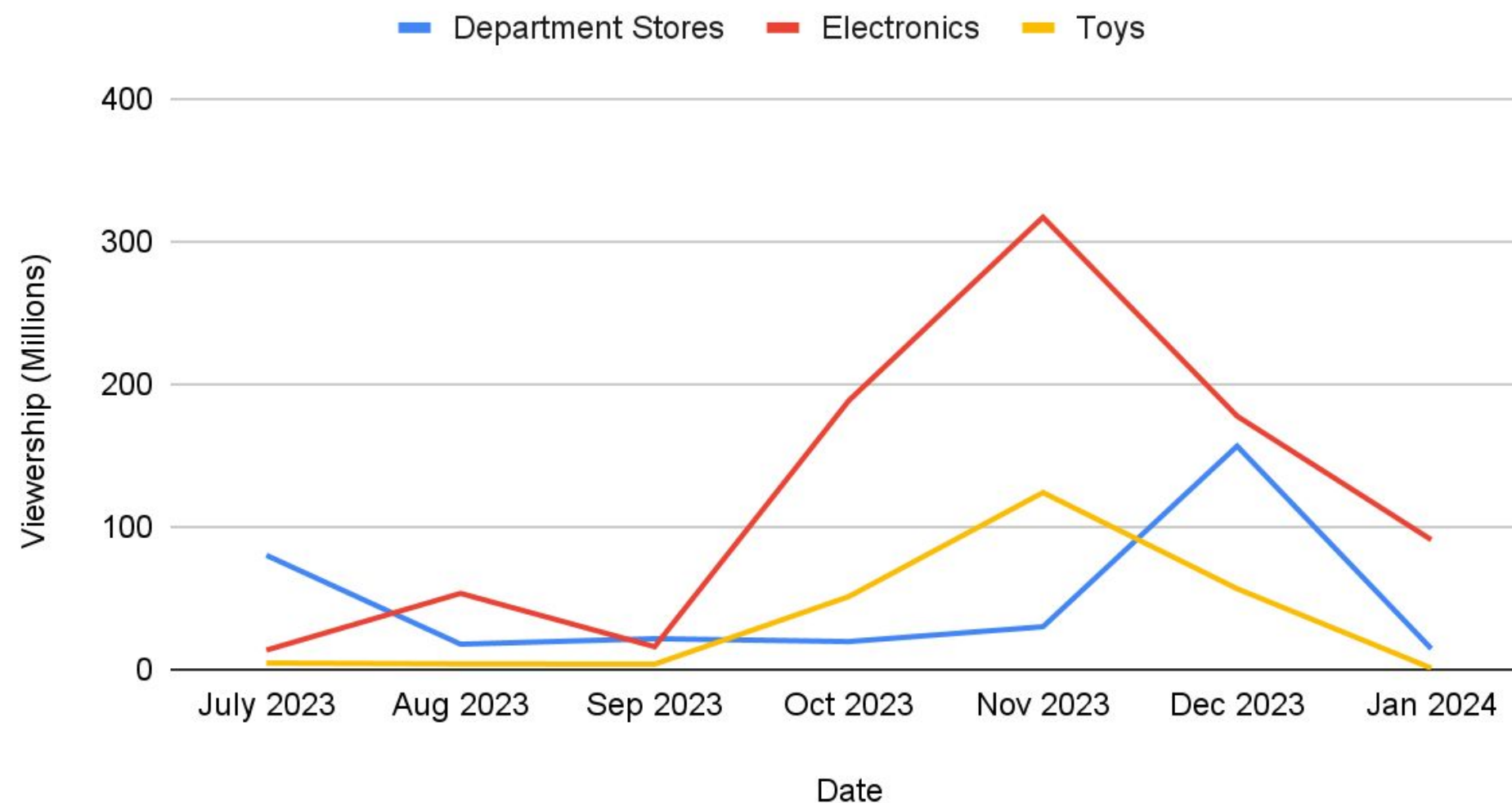
When should you start ramping up on holiday advertising? Not too early, not too late. Understanding when is the perfect time for your brand is key. First, let's look at the statistics.

## Linear + streaming impressions over the holiday season

*Let's inspect the campaign trends over the holiday season across four key industries: **Department Stores, Electronics, and Toys.***

Electronics show a significant spike in November, indicating the importance of this period for tech-related advertising. Department Stores and Toys also see an increase in impressions towards the end of the year, emphasizing the need for strategic ad placements during these peak times.

### Linear + streaming impressions over holiday season



Analyzing the impression trends across different industries provides valuable insights:

- Electronics:** The highest spike occurs in November, indicating a critical period for tech-related ads.
- Department Stores:** Significant increases in impression volumes towards the end of the year, especially in December.
- Toys:** Peak in impressions during November, emphasizing the importance of targeting family-oriented ads during this time.

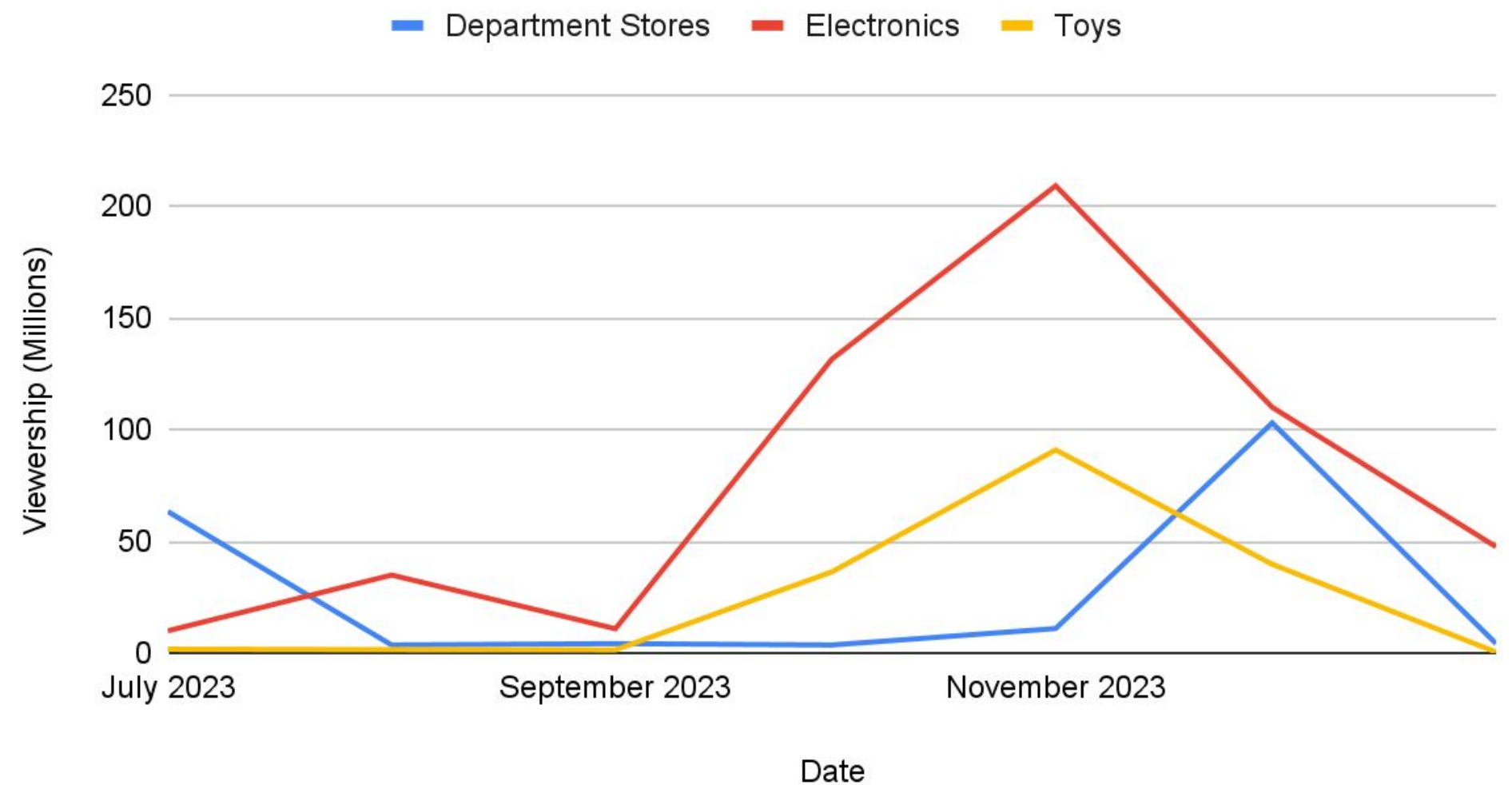


# When to start?

## Isolating just linear impressions over the holiday season

Let's focus on linear TV impressions for the same industries. Electronics once again lead with a notable spike in November, while Department Stores and Toys follow a similar trend but with lower peaks. This underscores the continued relevance of linear TV for reaching audiences during the holiday season, particularly for electronics.

### Linear impressions over holiday season



Analyzing the viewership trends across different industries provides valuable insights:

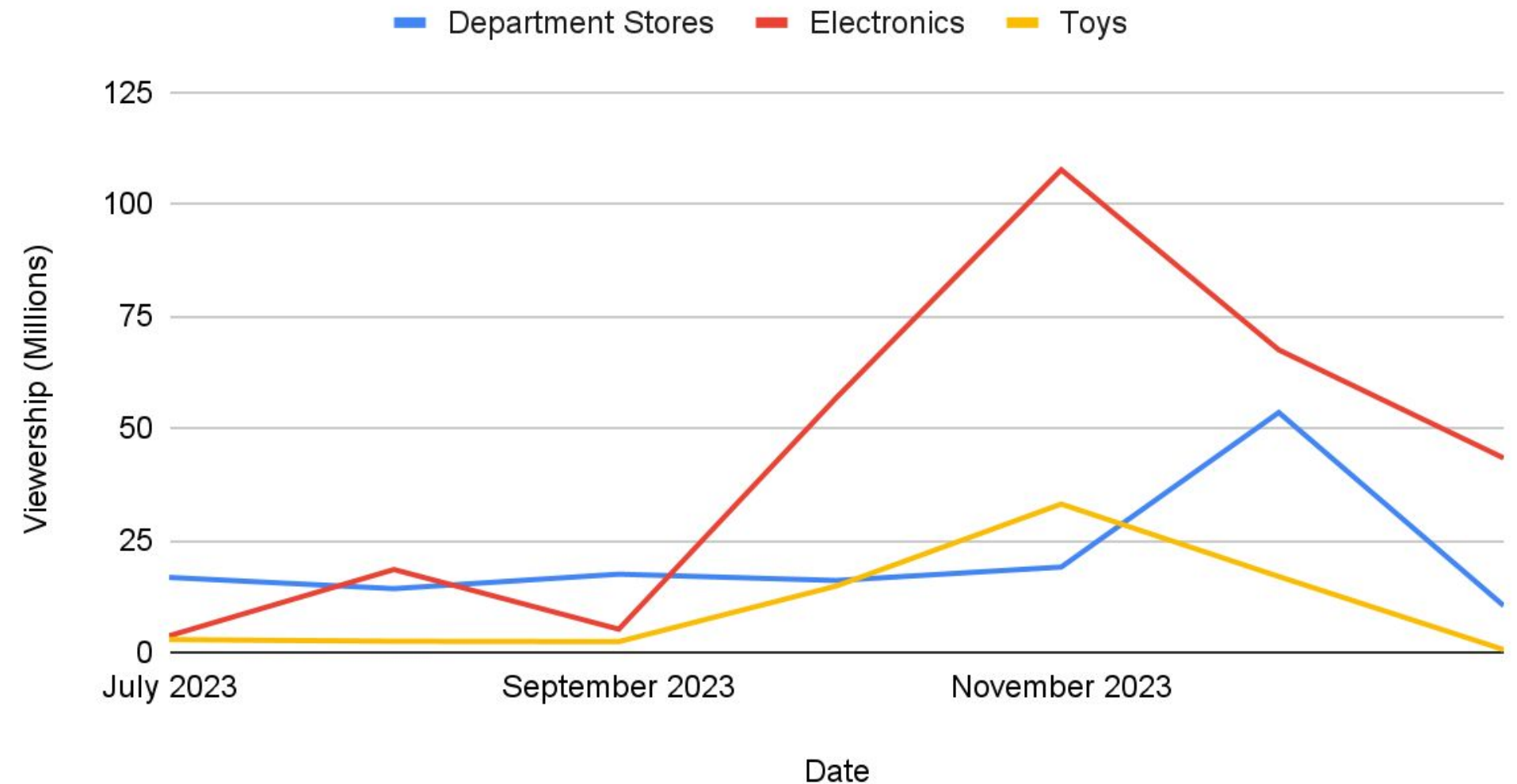
- Electronics:** High impression volumes start in October, with the highest spike occurring in November, indicating a critical period for tech-related ads.
- Department Stores:** Significant increases in impression volumes towards the end of the year, especially in December. Almost dark in linear during Sept - Oct.
- Toys:** Peak in impressions during November, steady decline in December, similar to the shape of this vertical's CTV curve

# When to start?

## Focusing on just streaming impressions over the holiday season

Let's now take a look at streaming impressions for Department Stores, Electronics, and Toys. While Electronics still dominate, Department Stores see a significant rise in December. This highlights the growing importance of streaming platforms for holiday advertising, particularly for department stores.

### Streaming impressions over holiday season



Analyzing the viewership trends across different industries provides valuable insights:

- Electronics:** The highest spike occurs in November, but impressions don't drop as much compared to linear curve
- Department Stores:** Significant increases in impression volumes towards the end of the year, especially in December, similar to linear.
- Toys:** Peak in impressions during the start of November, but not as pronounced as linear TV.



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# Tips from the Pros

**Here, we're not just sharing theory but practical advice from the pros.** We've collected the opinions of Simulmedia's experts, who know everything about TV ads.

XOXO

## Tips from the Pros

### Early Start and Phased Campaign Approach



*Marc Siegel, President of Sales*, suggests starting holiday campaigns right after Halloween. This timing captures early holiday shoppers without overwhelming consumers. By starting in early November, you can build awareness and engagement before transitioning to more promotional content as the season progresses.

#### **Siegel recommends a phased approach:**

- **Early November:** Focus on awareness and engagement to build anticipation.
- **Late November:** Transition to promotional content, especially around Black Friday and Cyber Monday.
- **December:** Intensify promotional efforts, including last-minute gift ideas and special holiday offers.

### Reach More, Repeat Less



*Jaime Singson, Senior Director of Product Marketing*, advises targeting as much of your audience as possible each week instead of increasing frequency.

Engaging in a share-of-voice battle with competitors might seem appealing, but over-repetition can turn consumers off. Since you can't know when each consumer will shop, it's more effective to maximize reach each week. **Focus on unique weekly reach to get your message to more consumers, rather than repeating ads to the same audience. Rotate creative variations to mitigate creative fatigue.**



## Tips from the Pros

### Analyze Consumer Behavior



*Erica Meyer, SVP of Operations and Client Success* emphasizes analyzing past consumer behavior and sales data to identify the most effective start times for holiday campaigns.

Different brands might have different optimal start times based on their target demographics and product types. For instance, high-end luxury brands might benefit from starting earlier to capture early planners, while more mass-market brands could start closer to key shopping dates.

### Utilize Advanced Analytics



*Steve Paule, EVP, Chief Product and Technology Officer*, underscores the role of advanced analytics and AI in predicting consumer shopping patterns and behaviors.

Conducting A/B testing can help determine the most effective content types for your holiday campaigns. Utilizing integrated platforms allows for seamless adjustments and real-time monitoring of campaign performance.

## Tips from the Pros

### Align with Business Goals



*Pravin Chandiramani, SVP of Business Development and Strategy*, stresses the importance of aligning holiday campaign start times with overall business goals and market conditions. Assess current market conditions and consumer sentiment to determine the best timing for campaign launches.

Coordinate with various stakeholders, including marketing, sales, and supply chain teams, to ensure a synchronized and effective campaign launch.

### Practical Execution and Resource Allocation



*Matthew Larmore, Sr. Account Executive, Growth*, focuses on the practical aspects of executing holiday campaigns. Develop a detailed execution timeline with key milestones and deadlines for campaign preparation and launch.

Ensure adequate resources for timely launch and ongoing campaign management. Implement continuous monitoring and optimization to maintain campaign effectiveness throughout the holiday season.



## Tips from the Pros

### Early Engagement and Cultural Sensitivity



*Dave Morgan, Executive Chairman*, advises starting with soft engagement campaigns in late October to build anticipation. He also emphasizes being mindful of cultural and regional differences in holiday shopping behaviors and adjusting start times accordingly. Monitoring competitors' campaign timings and strategies can ensure your brand remains competitive and top-of-mind for consumers.

### Video Advertising Strategy



*Kristen Bona, Senior Manager of Video*, provide insights on video advertising in holiday campaigns. Develop a robust video content strategy that aligns with the overall holiday campaign timeline.

Identify key dates and events (e.g., Black Friday, Cyber Monday) for major video ad pushes. Optimize video content for different platforms (e.g., TV, social media) to ensure maximum reach and engagement.



# Key points of successful TV advertising campaigns for the 2024 winter holiday season

The importance of being visible during the holiday season requires significant preparation and a detailed plan.



## ✓ Understand the Rising Costs

Holiday advertising costs rise due to high demand. Direct response media like search, paid social, and banner ads get more expensive. TV and connected TV (CTV) offer high engagement with primary screens and impactful audio-visual elements.

## ✓ Leverage Data-Driven Planning

Optimize ad spend across linear TV and CTV with a data-driven approach. Balance visibility and cost by targeting precise audience segments based on consumption data.

## ✓ Focus on Efficient Reach



Rising CPM (cost per thousand impressions) requires efficient audience reach. Use tools and strategies for high reach without overspending.

## ✓ Optimize for Streaming Market Trends

Streaming market growth and more platforms don't always mean better CPM rates. Despite CPM declines, streaming ad demand will rise.

## ✓ Tailor Your Ads to Specific Audiences

Create ad variants for specific demographics, psychographics, and geographies. Broad, generic ads are less effective; use detailed insights for meaningful content.



## ✓ Engage in Creative Pretesting

Evaluate ad performance before launch with creative pretesting. This helps identify better-performing ads and potential new audience segments.

## ✓ Balance Online and Offline Strategies



Understand online and offline shopping dynamics. Drive foot traffic to physical stores while enhancing e-commerce presence.

## ✓ Achieve a high "Share of Voice"

Ensure a significant share of voice during high-traffic events like Black Friday. Surpass competitors in reach and meet expected impressions by leveraging big data and data-driven techniques to go broad and find audiences in more efficient places than where advertisers with deeper pockets are already cornering. Solutions like Simulmedia's TV+ can help with that.

## ✓ Ensure Brand Safety

Focus on media environments that ensure brand safety. Closely monitor user-generated content platforms and emphasize good gender equality measures and high-quality representation.





## 2024 HOLIDAY SEASON FORECAST

Navigating the 2024 holiday season with a strategic TV ad campaign can be a game-changer. By understanding market trends, leveraging AI, and planning early, you set the stage for success. Embrace the excitement of the holiday rush, be adaptable, and remember: a well-prepared strategy is your best gift this season.

**Use creative storytelling to connect with your audience and stand out.  
Combine the broad reach of linear TV with the precision of digital platforms.**

# Let's make this holiday season unforgettable!

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