

Winter Holiday Grocery Planning

A comprehensive look at key events, items and strategies

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Though spring is upon us in most of the US, we realize that for Retailers and Manufacturers, it's time to start thinking about the upcoming Winter Holiday Season. What items and offers will you feature to help consumers enjoy meaningful holiday meals and celebrations? What approach will you take with your messaging and price perception? As you begin to consider these questions and more regarding your promotional and product mix for the fall, we'd like to provide you with some historical analysis on the promotional activity during this time period. This will help shape your strategies and determine the most effective approaches when promoting Grocery items during the November and December holidays. This research includes a national panel of over 120 grocers and 30 markets for the months of November and December. As we reviewed the findings from this important period, we identified a number of observations that should prove helpful in setting your 2011 strategy:

- The differences in promotional activity around Thanksgiving and Christmas
- Observations in circular strategy shifts among Retailers
- Unique promotions specific to the holiday time period

A key observation is that retailers are not focusing on holiday item promotions as heavily for Christmas as they are for Thanksgiving. Across the board, key categories were promoted much more significantly in the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, while we observed the trend to be weaker before Christmas. Interestingly when we overlay retailer sales insights supplied by Acosta with the promotional data, we see an increase in sales around the Christmas holiday equal to that of Thanksgiving. Are retailers missing an opportunity? Are some grocers not featuring key Christmas products during weeks 51 and 52 when consumers are spending more money? During both events there are substantial opportunities to increase sales and generate traffic to stores. In order to capitalize on this, grocers and their CPG partners should continue to focus on product, placement, pricing and promotions of the relevant holiday categories.

From a sales dollar perspective, **weeks 48 and 52 were both 15% higher than the average for the period**, which is already the highest sales volume period of the year. However, from a front page focus perspective, **Thanksgiving circulars greatly outpaced their Christmas counterparts**. Are retailers missing an opportunity to hone in on a prime shopping week?

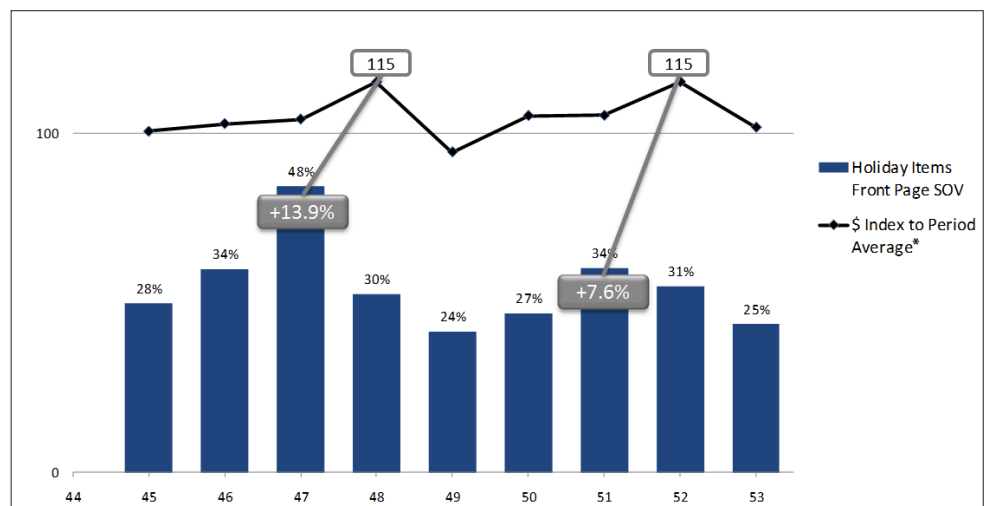


Figure 1: Front Page SOV/Index to Period Average

* Source: Acosta Sales and Marketing

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