

# Get ready for peak shopping season

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# Contents

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# Get ready for peak shopping season



During the upcoming holiday shopping season, you likely anticipate higher-than-usual sales volume. Being proactive and preparing now is key to making sure this critical season is a successful one for your business.

To take advantage of consumers' increased appetite for shopping this time of year, you may be implementing unique selling strategies, special promotions, and even some new channels.

These could, however, open your business up to increased fraud risk—or lead to an overly strict fraud strategy that could compromise the shopping experience for genuine customers.

Drawing on the experience and insights of Visa's global Managed Risk Analyst team, we've compiled tips to help you protect your business from fraud while delivering a frictionless experience for genuine customers.

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2024 Holiday spending is expected to reach a new record, according to the National Retail Foundation.<sup>1</sup>

# 6 tips to prepare for the holiday shopping season



## 1. Understand the holiday chargeback cycle

Chargebacks, or charges returned to payment cards after customers dispute items on their account statements, may be reported up to 120 days after purchase.

To avoid being caught off guard, make sure that the responsible team understands the holiday chargeback cycle. To do this, create a chargeback forecast based on:

- Chargebacks reported in the previous year
- Previous year peak transaction volume
- Current year peak volume expectations

If the forecast amount looks like a cause for concern, you should plan for fraud strategy updates while acknowledging the potential increase in customer friction and false positives.



## 2. Collaborate with marketing to identify promotion and sale periods

Your marketing and sales teams put a lot of effort into planning peak season sales rollout, including:

- Which products will be on sale.
- How they'll be marketed to different target groups.
- The launch schedule for marketing campaigns.

Customer spending patterns are different this time of year, especially with the addition of sales and promotions. Make sure your website or shopping cart platform has a fraud strategy that equips you to accept orders in line with those campaigns.

To avoid adding unnecessary friction, consider making fraud strategy changes that tie in with those campaigns. Think about, for example, loyal customers who receive an email promoting a particular product that's available at a special price on a certain day. When one of those customers goes to buy three of them on the same day, you need to be able to recognize this behavior as normal and prevent standard screening checks (such as velocity) from flagging the order as suspicious.



### 3. Plan IT requests in advance

During such an important season, make sure your website is up to date and working well in advance of any promotions or sales. The last thing you want is to discover a problem during peak traffic. Stay informed about what your IT team is doing and, as the shopping season approaches, only make website enhancements that are absolutely necessary, given the importance of the period.

No matter how far in advance you put in your request, the IT roadmap may have changed over time, pushing your enhancement back. So be ready with a business case showing the impact on peak season of your requested IT enhancement. Express it in financial terms that everyone can understand.



### 5. Review last year's performance and set goals for this year

Just as you would set personal and professional goals throughout the year, now is a good time to do the same for the holiday shopping season.

Review last year's performance and identify areas where you can set realistic goals for improvement. These could be:

- Lowering chargeback rates.
- Decreasing friction at checkout.
- Reducing customer service inquiries.



### 4. Start testing your fraud strategies now

Examine the fraud strategies that worked last year, then add what's working right now as well as any additional strategies or tools needed to protect your business.

Don't wait until Black Friday to start testing changes, as it will be too late to do a thorough job. Testing early gives you:

- More opportunities to identify what really works and what needs to be adjusted.
- More time to refine your strategy accordingly.
- More scope to uncover new ways to use your data for strategic advantage.



### 6. Plan communication alignment and time off

As your peak shopping period approaches, the flurry of emails in your business will intensify—meaning important communications could get lost in overcrowded inboxes. Be proactive with your communications, especially on the topic of time off, as you'll want to ensure you have enough staff at key moments throughout the season. We suggest you communicate scheduled time off and work expectations to everyone.

In your communications with customers, consider sharing your team's peak season availability and time off plans and setting expectations around your ability to respond to emails. You may also find it useful to ask your partners and suppliers about their plans.

# Solutions



## Help protect your customers—and your business—from fraud

This season's sales likely account for a large percentage of your annual volume, so you can't afford a fraud attack that will slow you down or, worse, stop you from accepting orders. When you are offering promotions and experiencing a higher volume of customer traffic and orders, your website could be at greater risk for fraud.

Advanced Fraud Detection Suite (AFDS), an Authorize.net offering, is our streamlined, customer-friendly solution. It helps identify, manage, and prevent suspicious and potentially fraudulent transactions, which can be costly.

- Reduce costs by helping minimize and prevent authorization and chargeback fees as well as possible inventory loss from fraudulent transactions.
- Protect your profits by maximizing legitimate transactions while limiting potential fraud.
- Utilize flexibility by configuring filter settings according to your unique business needs.
- Improve intelligence by restricting transactions and activity from specific countries and IP addresses.

### Already using the Authorize.net platform?

These filters are built in, and our setup wizard makes it easy to configure them. Per-transaction notifications can provide detail in near-real time.

AFDS comes with 13 easily configurable filters to set proper minimum transaction thresholds, payment velocity settings, country limitations, and more to help flag fraudulent transactions.

## Simplify payments and boost revenue with personalized experiences

Many businesses with an online presence streamline the checkout experience for repeat customers. Our Customer Information Manager (CIM) makes it easy for returning customers to pay without re-entering their details.

- Store sensitive payment information on our secure servers, simplifying compliance with payment card industry standards (PCI DSS).
- Dynamically process recurring transactions or usage charges with varying amounts, such as utility bills or pay-as-you-go phones. CIM keeps payments on track and on time.
- Offer your customers more choice with a solution that allows you to embrace new payment methods quickly and confidently.
- Authorize.net can help provide the tools you need to give your customers a secure and seamless shopping experience, even when volume is high.

## Automate monthly credit card updates

It costs 7x more to get a new customer than to keep a current one.<sup>1</sup> So every time you find a way to better serve your customers, you win. That's why we built Account Updater. It's a simple way to keep your customers' card-on-file information updated to help ensure you keep getting paid—and your customers keep receiving services after a busy shopping season.

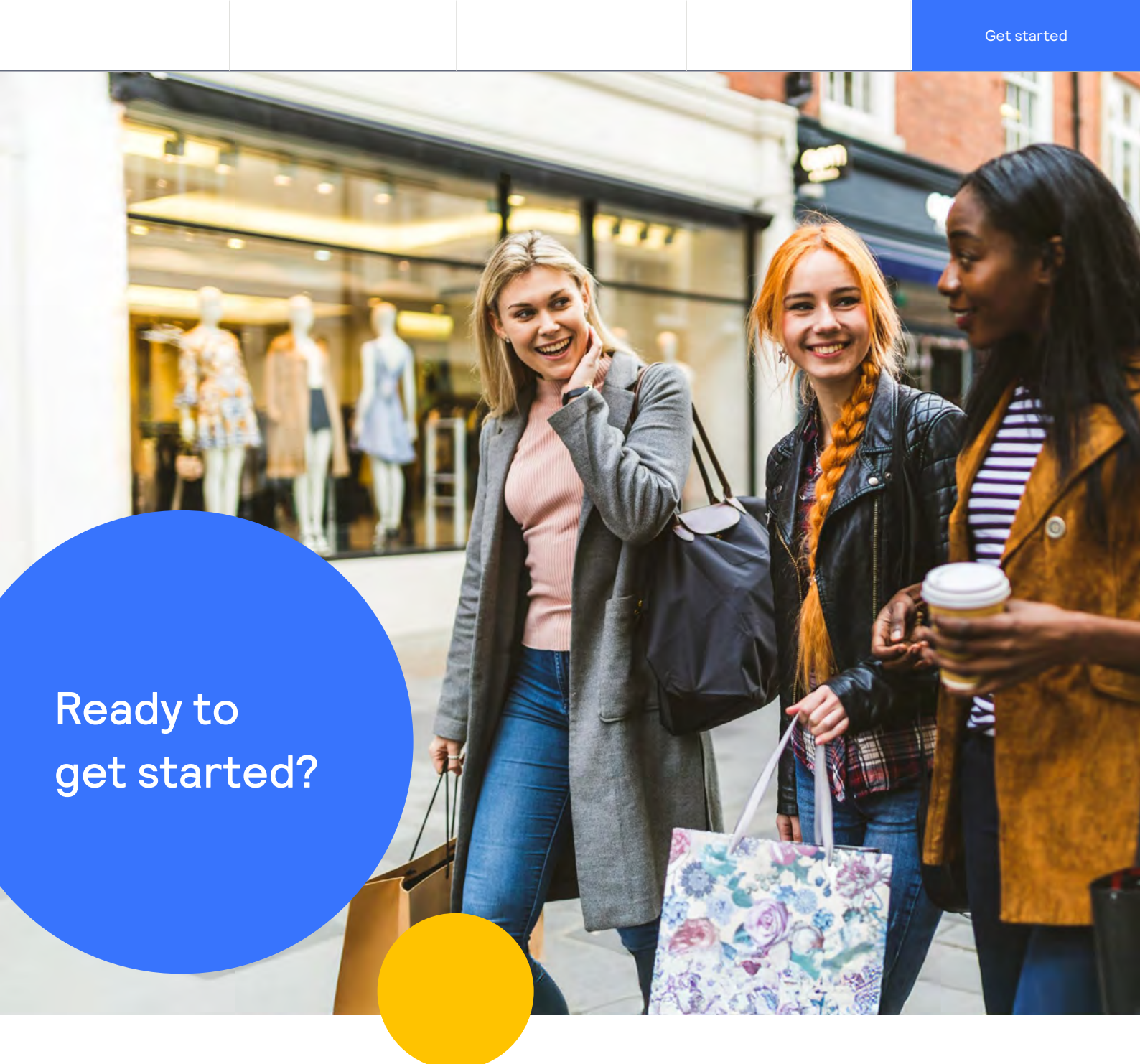
- Automatic monthly cardholder updates.
- Happy customers mean better retention and loyalty (and sales).
- Reduce the costs associated with individually contacting customers to obtain their updated information.
- Easy-to-read reports summarize which customer cards were updated and why, the type of card, and whether the account was closed.

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“Account Updater is a game changer for Dollar for Portland.

We would have people that would sign up and then their card would get lost or stolen or expire and then we'd never hear from them again.”

—Jared Walker, Dollar for Portland, Authorize.net customer



Ready to  
get started?

## Get started

While the best time to prepare for peak season might have been yesterday, the next best time is today. Our experts are here to help you prepare for a smooth and secure holiday shopping experience for both you and your customers.

Reach out to us at 1-877-447-3938 if you have any questions or would like to learn more about our products and services. And check out our Support Center for frequently asked questions. Our award-winning support team is also here to help you 24x7 (closed major holidays).