



How weather-driven marketing cuts through the seasonal ad blizzard

A marketer's playbook for the 2026 holiday season



Weather drives decisions

Marketers, it's time to stop planning by dates and let weather-driven mindsets be your guide.

This data-driven playbook reveals how the forecast can become your most powerful holiday marketing ally. And it's sure to be the holiday gift you won't want to return.



The holiday marketing climate

The snowball effect is real

U.S. retail ad spend forecasted to exceed **\$105B** in 2026.²

Consumers are tightening their scarves (and budgets)

85% cited inflation as their Grinch³, trimming their lists more than ever.

It's a holiday advertising avalanche

Shoppers hit **six touchpoints** on their journey – from TikTok to CTV to in-store.⁴

Performance marketing and brand building are having their own holiday tug-of-war

70% of marketers feel pulled between short-term sales and long-term brand goals.⁵

Holiday retail sales will surpass

\$1.4 trillion

in 2026¹



Most brands bet big on Black Friday through Cyber Monday. But shoppers are making holiday decisions every day from Halloween to New Year's.

Weather is the holiday marketing signal you can't ignore

Like clockwork: When the first snowflakes begin to fall up north, streaming queues fill up with feel-good holiday movies and playlists. When sunshine breaks through a rainy Northwest in December, in-store shopping sees a spike. When a cold snap hits the South, online searches for brands offering warmth, convenience, and quick delivery win the click.

1 in 3

shoppers are likely to make impulse purchases influenced by weather conditions⁶

80%

adjust holiday activities – including shopping – based on the forecast⁷

99%

of consumers use The Weather Channel digital platforms during the holiday season, and half check the weather more frequently when making holiday plans⁸



Strike when the thermometer drops. Holiday shoppers are primed for impulse buys when the weather shifts. Get there first or get lost in the clutter.

The power of weather in holiday planning

Holiday decisions begin with a weather check on The Weather Channel digital experiences. It's the contextual compass guiding shoppers through the season.



78%

say weather determines their holiday meal planning and plane travel schedules¹¹

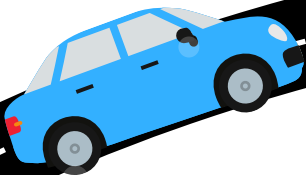
92%

check before RSVPing to holiday gatherings (when party supplies and host gifts are top of mind)¹⁰



95%

check before holiday road trips (making it the perfect moment to reach travelers)⁹



90%

check before heading out to shop for holiday gifts (deciding between your store location or a competitor's)¹²



Be the brand that reads the room – and the barometer. Your message belongs in that magical moment between “What’s the temperature?” and “Where should we go?”



The emotional thermometer

Marketing is ultimately about emotion, and few forces invite emotional responses more reliably than weather.

53%

say cold, snowy conditions transport them to holidays past – nostalgia marketing's sweet spot¹³

51%

report that weather intensifies holiday memory creation – making weather-matched moments ideal for brand imprinting¹⁴

42%

don't feel the holiday spirit until the weather shifts – regardless of how early retailers start their promotions¹⁵



Weather doesn't just change behavior – it changes receptivity. Nail that timing and you're not just another ad. You're the smart voice that became part of a moment they'll remember.

The Gen Z weather connection: Tuned in, turned up, and totally forecast-driven

Gen Z is particularly influenced by winter weather. This generation doesn't just check the weather – they *feel* it, *share* it, and *shop* according to it.

Weather lifts the holiday spirit

62% more likely than the general population to say weather impacts their overall enjoyment of the holiday season¹⁶

Chilly weather warms the heart

68% report nostalgic feelings influenced by cold, snowy weather during the holidays¹⁷

Holiday vibes drive holiday buys

53% actively seek out holiday activities – including shopping – when weather “feels like the holidays”¹⁸

White snow, green light

37% say the first snowfall is their signal to start holiday preparations¹⁹

Snowstorms = scroll storms

35% — that's how much social media surges during cold, snowy days, nearly tripling the spike typically seen on New Year's Eve in New York City²⁰



Weather doesn't just lift Gen Z's likes – it launches their content calendar. They're turning your weather-synced products into social currency, giving you even greater marketing value.

Let weather guide your holiday strategy



Weather-based advertising doesn't just perform better – it creates memorable moments that engage users year round.

Why The Weather Company

Not all weather providers are equal. Partner with the leader in weather data, intelligence, and experiences. We turn the world's most accurate forecast data²¹ into actionable insights across all channels, supporting your broader digital strategy.

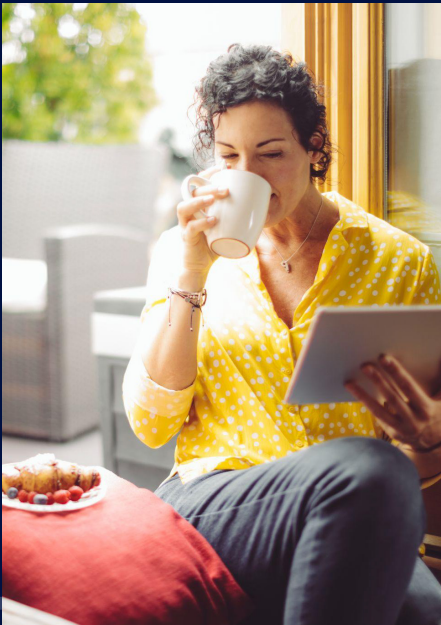
Unmatched reach and trust

300M+ people around the world²² rely on our digital experiences. Think about that level of trust – and how you could leverage these moments to connect with consumers.

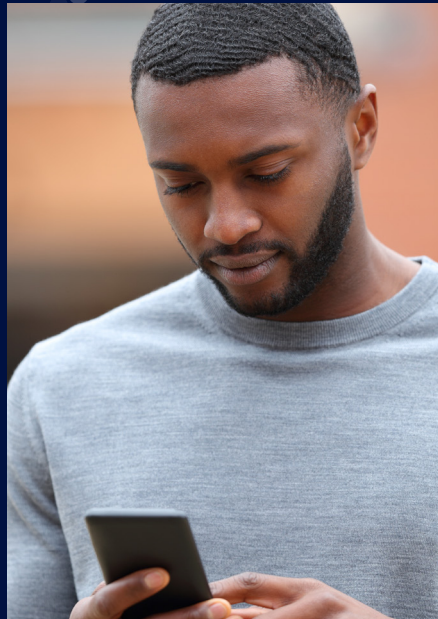
Precision targeting that works

Predict consumer behaviors, decisions, and emotions with privacy-forward Weather Targeting signals. Reach audiences across the digital ecosystem when they're most receptive and eliminate media waste.

Apply Weather Targeting across the digital ecosystem



Social media



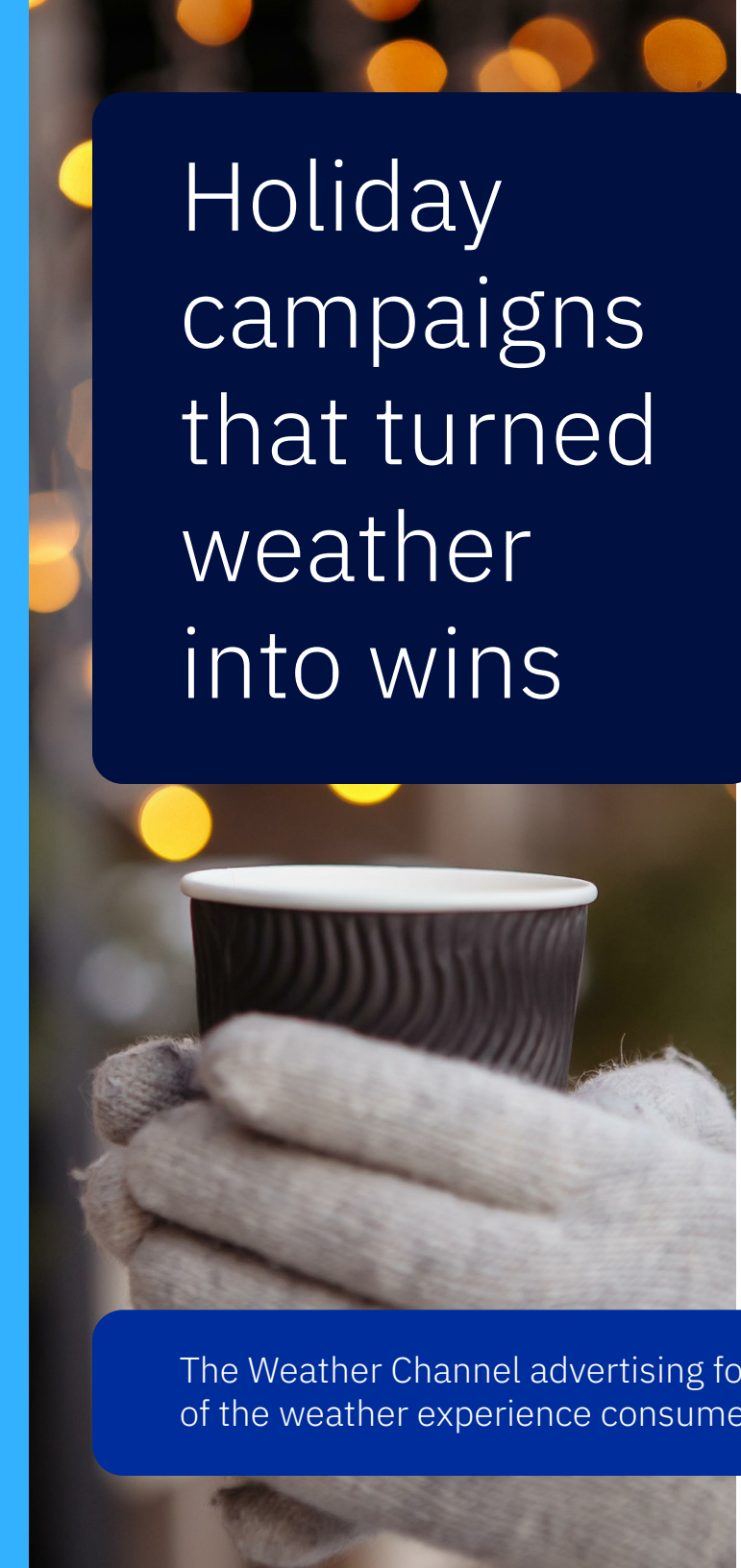
Search



Connected TV
(CTV)



Digital out-of-home
(DOOH)



Holiday campaigns that turned weather into wins

CASE STUDY

High-impact personalization: How a global coffee brand savored the moment

When a beloved coffee chain wanted to make their holiday menu irresistible, they stopped thinking about the calendar and started thinking about the thermometer.

Strategy

Rather than static holiday messaging, they used Integrated Marquee ads — exclusive to The Weather Channel digital experiences — to dynamically feature peppermint hot chocolate during cold snaps and festive iced beverages during unseasonable warmth.

Moment

As temperatures dropped across the Northeast, mobile users checking their The Weather Channel app saw an animation of steam rising from a peppermint-garnished cup with the message “This weather calls for something special” and a one-tap map to the nearest location.

Results

12.2%

lift in foot traffic compared to control markets²³

94,400

incremental store visits attributed directly to weather-targeted moments²⁴

The Weather Channel advertising formats don't just appear alongside weather information — they become part of the weather experience consumers already trust.

CASE STUDY

Personalization with precision: How a tailored fit elevated results for an apparel retailer

A national clothing retailer faced a common holiday challenge: How do you create a unified winter campaign when December means snowstorms in Minneapolis and beach weather in Miami?

Strategy

Instead of generic “holiday fashion” messaging, they used Weather Targeting to show region-specific collections that reflected actual local conditions.

Experience

Shoppers in Denver seeing heavy snow received promotions for the brand’s premium snow boots with cozy styling ideas, while Atlanta customers experiencing mild temperatures saw lightweight layering options perfect for southern winters.

Results

10.1%

lift in online ad awareness
across markets²⁵

19.2%

boost in online ad
awareness among the
18-44 demographic²⁶

20.5%

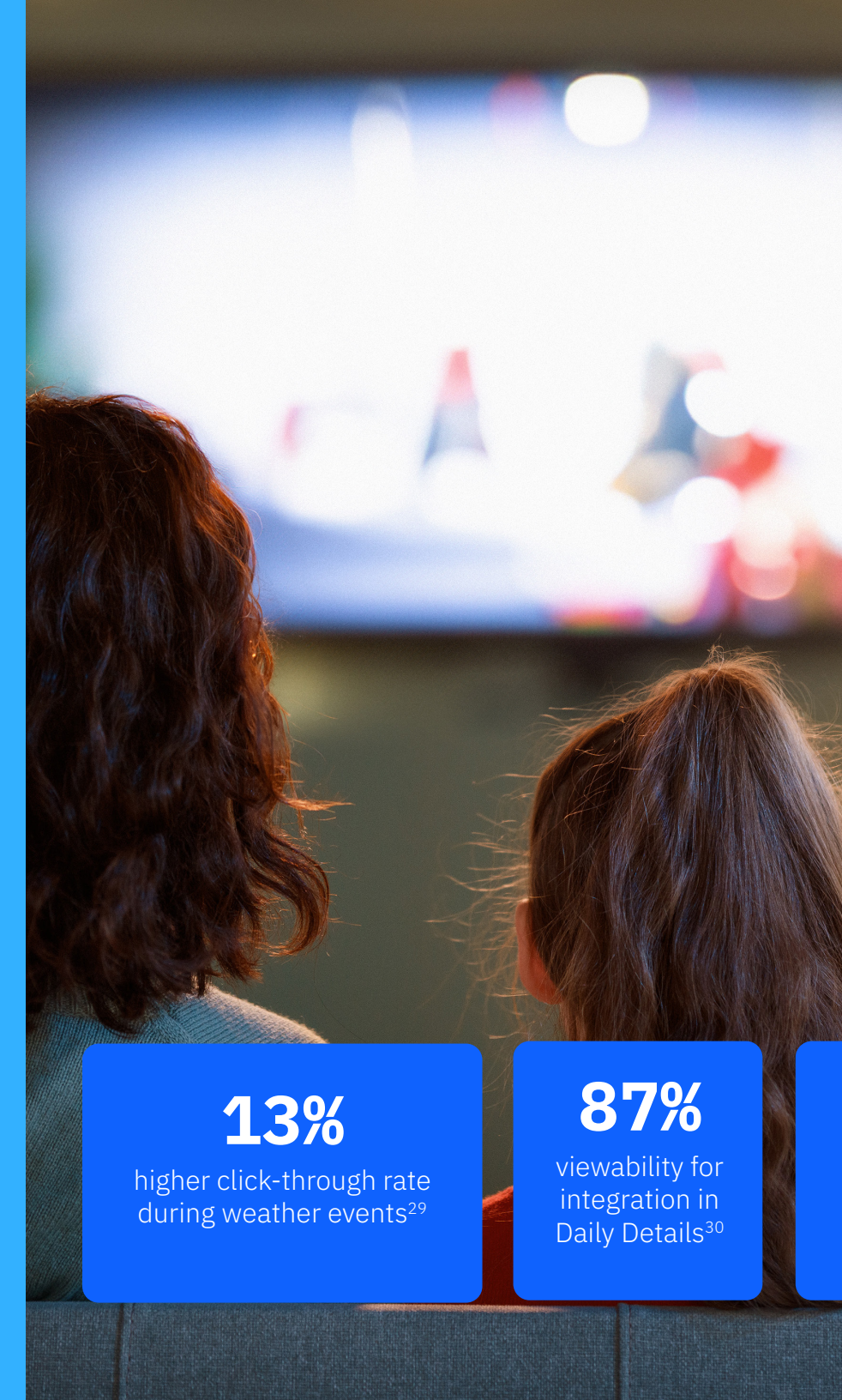
increase in brand
familiarity among the
18-44 demographic²⁷

Products featured in
weather-matched ads sold

27%

faster than control items²⁸





CASE STUDY

Perfectly queued up: How a streaming platform engaged with consumers, not the calendar

A streaming platform recognized that weather doesn't just affect what people wear – it changes what they want to watch.

Strategy

They used Planning Moments to align content recommendations with approaching weather systems, promoting family films before predicted snow days and cozy romantic comedies ahead of rainy weekends.

Experience

When weather forecasts showed a major weekend storm system approaching, Thursday and Friday viewers saw messages like “Storm coming Saturday? We’ve got your perfect indoor day planned” with new release suggestions.

Results

13%

higher click-through rate during weather events²⁹

87%

viewability for integration in Daily Details³⁰

7M+

unique viewers engaged with branded weather insight cards³¹

Subscribers reported

34%

higher satisfaction with recommendations that acknowledged their actual circumstances³²

CASE STUDY

Thinking outside the big box: How a retailer rang up ROI across the advertising ecosystem

When your creative acknowledges and enhances the actual conditions your audience is experiencing, you transform from interruption to valued service.

Strategy

Rather than the standard “countdown to Christmas” approach, a department store created a weather-responsive ecosystem spanning social, search, CTV, and in-app advertising.

Execution

When weather systems approached, search budgets increased for relevant categories. Cold fronts inspired cozy gift messaging on social media. The first regional snow activated special offers in those markets only.

Results

4.2%

higher brand awareness lift compared to the previous year's traditional campaign³³

19.2%

increase in brand consideration among key demographic segments³⁴

Return on ad spend jumped

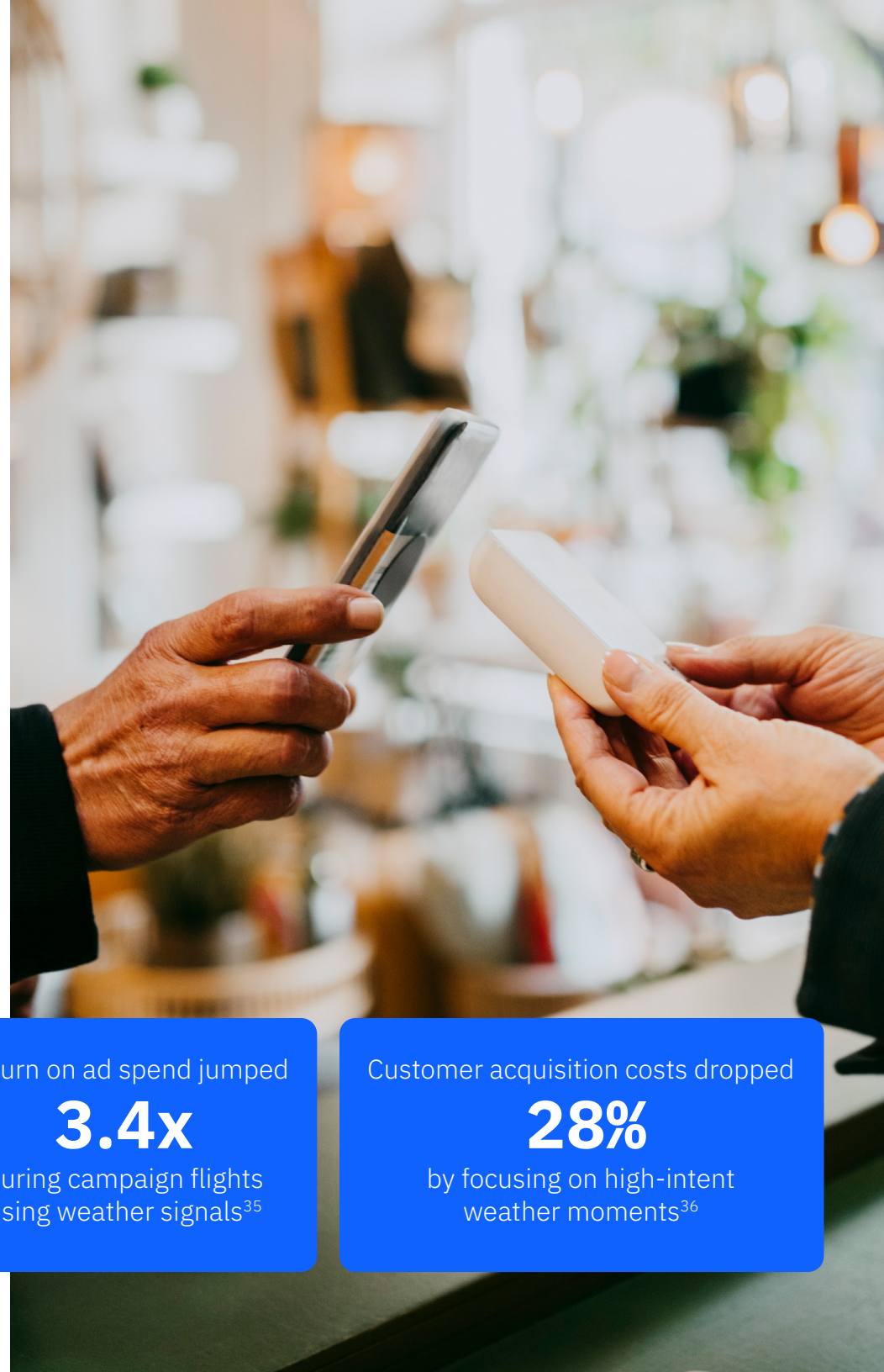
3.4x

during campaign flights using weather signals³⁵

Customer acquisition costs dropped

28%

by focusing on high-intent weather moments³⁶



Your marketing edge year round

Weather—not just calendar dates—sparks the mindset that drives consumer action. Smart marketers leverage both.



JANUARY Mindset: Reset and reframe Cue: Cold snaps drive indoor shopping and a health and home refresh	FEBRUARY Mindset: Cozy meets craving change Cue: Weather whiplash supports dual winter/spring messaging	MARCH Mindset: Ready for the switch Cue: First warmth sparks early outdoor prep and last-chance winter clearance	APRIL Mindset: Spring into motion Cue: Rainy weekends and longer days boost spring cleaning, home improvement, and holiday planning	MAY Mindset: Outdoors unlocked Cue: Warm weather fuels seasonal purchases, garden prep, and event planning	JUNE Mindset: Full-on summer mode Cue: School's out, travel spikes, outdoor grilling heats up, and product discovery peaks
JULY Mindset: Celebrate and stay cool Cue: Heat waves drive people indoors – whether it's staying in to stream or heading out to the movies – while boosting demand for beverages and comfort foods	AUGUST Mindset: The last summer hurrah Cue: Late-summer storms and early fall prep fuel back-to-school and early seasonal shopping	SEPTEMBER Mindset: Seasonal shift Cue: Cooler mornings and shorter days signal wardrobe updates and home transitions	OCTOBER Mindset: Cozy mode loading Cue: First chill sets off comfort food cravings, fall décor, and holiday anticipation	NOVEMBER Mindset: Countdown begins Cue: Weather drives travel, hosting prep, and gift planning well before Black Friday	DECEMBER Mindset: Full festive swing Cue: Weather amplifies emotion, urgency, and brand connection – every day matters

What's your weather strategy?

To learn more about harnessing the power of weather to increase engagement and drive growth, [contact](#) our advertising experts today.

Sources:

¹ eMarketer July 2026

² eMarketer Forecast, August 2025

³ Manhattan Associates, [Survey Brings to Light Retailers and Consumers' Sentiment Around the Upcoming Holiday Season](#).

⁴ Capital One Shopping, [Omnichannel Statistics](#), 2024.

⁵ tvScientific, [2024 Holiday Advertising Trends Every Marketer Needs to Know](#), 2024.

^{6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19} TWC Holiday Consumer Behavior Survey, December 2024

²⁰ Psychological Science, [Worse Weather Amplifies Social Media Activity](#), 2025.

²¹ ForecastWatch's 2021-2024 global forecast accuracy study

²² Based on the average of the total monthly (non-unique) users for January – December 2025 across The Weather Company digital properties and consumer products (weather.com, The Weather Channel app, Weather Underground app, wunderground.com, Storm iOS app), according to The Weather Channel internal, global data

^{23 24} InMarket Q4 2023

^{25 26 27 28} Dynata

^{29 30 31 32} DCM; DoubleVerify

^{33 34 35 36} Dynata

