

MG OMD'S GUIDE TO **THE GOLDEN** HALF

FROM AUGUST TO JANUARY: YOUR PLAYBOOK
ON HOW TO WIN IN RETAIL'S BUSIEST SEASON

MG omd





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FORGET THE GOLDEN QUARTER. **THINK: THE GOLDEN HALF**

The retail landscape is shifting—fast. With more ways to shop, more platforms to browse, and more cultural moments shaping consumer behaviour, the traditional Golden Quarter is no longer enough.

**BOLD BRANDS ARE ALREADY PLANNING
FOR SIX MONTHS OF OPPORTUNITY,
NOT JUST THREE.**

THE FACTS:

01

Summer presents both sales and priming opportunities: UK retail sales saw back-to-back months of volume growth in July and August 2024, with summer events and early shopping driving momentum into Q3. *Mintel, Autumn 2024*

02

Holiday shopping starts earlier: 60% of UK consumers now begin their holiday shopping before November, spreading spend across a longer period and diluting the traditional Q4 spike. *YouGov, Jan 2025*

03

It's not just Christmas anymore: 30% of UK consumers actively disengage with Christmas advertising, seeking alternative cultural moments and experiences. *YouGov, Jan 2025*



FORGET THE GOLDEN QUARTER. THINK: THE GOLDEN HALF

THE CHALLENGE:

Consumer attention is fragmented, confidence is mixed, and competitive noise is louder than ever. Brands that cling to the old playbook risk missing out on new audiences, new moments, and new growth.

THE SOLUTION:

The Golden Half. Six months of opportunity, mapped to the real rhythms of modern Britain.

This guide is your playbook for Summer right through to January, packed with actionable insights, case studies, and tools to help you...

01

Uncover the rhythm of the Golden Half:

Identify the key moments and beats that matter for your brand —beyond just Christmas

02

Spot opportunities for competitive advantage:

Learn how to reach disengaged audiences, show up in new spaces, and outsmart (not just outspend) the competition

03

Embrace inclusivity and sustainability:

Discover how to engage diverse communities and tap into the rise of meaningful, sustainable gifting

04

See it in action:

Dive into real-world case studies from those winning the Golden Half

05

Get your toolkit:

Practical frameworks, checklists, and pro tips to set your brand up for success

READY TO RETHINK THE GOLDEN HALF? **LET'S GET STARTED.**



LOOKING FORWARD: THE H2 LANDSCAPE





LOOKING FORWARD: THE H2 LANDSCAPE

THE CHALLENGE:

Consumer confidence is flat. The headlines are gloomy. Government spending remains under close review. And with the current US trade policy around tariffs, global uncertainty is the only certainty

THE OPPORTUNITY:

But the UK consumer is nothing if not resilient. The brands that are ready, agile, and creative will be first in line when the mood shifts.

CHALLENGE:

Cautious Consumers:

People are saving, not spending—even with low unemployment and a growing economy.

Economic Headwinds:

Government spending is tight, and the market is watching every move.

Global Volatility:

The US Effect: geopolitical tensions, and economic noise keep the market on edge.

Ad Spend Uncertainty:

Traditional media is under pressure.

OPPORTUNITY:

The ‘Revenge-Spend’ Effect:

Household debt is down, savings are up. When confidence returns, there’s real firepower ready to be unleashed.

Brand-Led Growth:

Brands that create their own momentum (through value, creativity, and relevance) will win.

UK Resilience:

The UK is relatively insulated. Brands that plan for multiple scenarios and stay agile can ride out the bumps.

Retail Media Rising:

Retail media and digital channels are outperforming. H1 retail spend is up – especially in food, digital, and retail media.



LOOKING FORWARD: THE H2 LANDSCAPE

WHAT'S THE PLAY?

Don't wait for the mood to change, be the brand that moves first, adapts fastest, and shows up where your audience is already looking. The next wave of growth will go to those who are ready to catch it.



PERIODS OF UNCERTAINTY ALWAYS CREATE WINNERS AND LOSERS. THE BRANDS THAT PLAN FOR MULTIPLE SCENARIOS, STAY CLOSE TO THEIR AUDIENCES, AND ACT WITH AGILITY WILL BE BEST PLACED TO CAPTURE THE NEXT WAVE OF GROWTH.”

BHAVIN BALVANTRAI, CHIEF MARKET ANALYST, OMG UK



THE RHYTHM OF THE GOLDEN HALF





THE RHYTHM OF THE GOLDEN HALF

The Golden Half isn't just a countdown to Christmas – it's a series of distinct retail rhythms, each with its own audiences, behaviours, and opportunities. Brands that understand and adapt to these shifting moments will unlock value all season long.

WE SPLIT THE GOLDEN HALF INTO FOUR KEY MOMENTS:

01

EARLY GOLDEN HALF

(August to October)

02

PEAK

(November)

03

CHRISTMAS

(December 1st
to Christmas Day)

04

POST-CHRISTMAS

('Twixmas' & January)



01

EARLY GOLDEN HALF: THE SEASON STARTS HERE

The Golden Half kicks off with a flurry of activity, long before the first Christmas ad lands. This is the time to prime your brand, engage new audiences, and unlock value from moments that are often overlooked.

OPPORTUNITY:
PRIME YOUR BRAND,
ENGAGE NEW AUDIENCES,
AND UNLOCK VALUE FROM
OVERLOOKED MOMENTS.

02

PEAK: THE RETAIL CRESCENDO

Has Black Friday peaked? It will always be the biggest single moment, but we are seeing more spending earlier in November, bringing the whole month up to create a mega moment.

OPPORTUNITY:
DRIVE URGENCY
AND VOLUME, BUT STAY
AGILE AND CONNECTED
ACROSS CHANNELS.

03

CHRISTMAS: STILL THE HEART, BUT THE RHYTHM IS CHANGING

Christmas remains the emotional centre of the Golden Half, but the way people shop is evolving. Some plan early, others leave it late, and more are travelling or disengaging altogether.

OPPORTUNITY:
STILL THE EMOTIONAL
HEART OF THE SEASON,
BUT THE MOMENTS – AND
AUDIENCES – ARE CHANGING
ACROSS CHANNELS.

04

TWIXMAS POST- CHRISTMAS: THE OVERLOOKED OPPORTUNITY

The days between Christmas and New Year, “Twixmas”, are fascinating moments from an audience behaviour perspective, each offering unique retail opportunities.

January brings the “fresh start” effect, with consumers open to new brands and behaviours.

OPPORTUNITY:
A UNIQUE WINDOW FOR
ATTENTIVE AUDIENCES AND
NEW GROWTH.



“THE GOLDEN HALF IS A SERIES OF DISTINCT RETAIL RHYTHMS, EACH WITH ITS OWN AUDIENCES, BEHAVIOURS, AND OPPORTUNITIES. THE BRANDS THAT WIN ARE THOSE WHO LOOK BEYOND THE OBVIOUS, PLAN FOR EVERY PHASE, AND SHOW UP AUTHENTICALLY IN THE MOMENTS THAT MATTER – NOT JUST AT CHRISTMAS, BUT ALL SEASON LONG.”



**ADRIAN WONG,
HEAD OF INSIGHT**





READY, SET, GOLD





THE BRANDS WINNING THE GOLDEN HALF AREN'T JUST PRESENT, THEY'RE PREPARED.

Digital maturity, sharp insights, and seamless commerce are now table stakes. From harnessing retail media to mastering TikTok Shop, this is where readiness turns into real results. Here's how to make sure your brand is set to lead, not lag.

ACHIEVING SUCCESS IN TODAY'S DIGITAL AGE REQUIRES MORE THAN JUST BASIC CAPABILITIES. BY FOCUSING ON DIGITAL MATURITY, YOUR BRAND CAN EFFECTIVELY TURN READINESS INTO REAL RESULTS - DRIVING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE.

WE ARE JUST AT THE BEGINNING OF HOW AI CAN AND WILL TRANSFORM SHOPPING EXPERIENCES SO BUILDING SOLID FOUNDATIONS NOW WILL BE KEY TO FUTURE SUCCESS. LET'S GO!"



**ALI SMITH,
HEAD OF CLIENT SERVICE, DIGITAL**

AUDIT BEFORE YOU ACCELERATE

WHY IT MATTERS:

The second half of the year is unforgiving—gaps in your digital setup will be exposed. A digital maturity audit is your pre-season MOT.

HOW TO DO IT:

- Account Maturity: Average your channel maturity by pillar to get a true read on readiness.
- Channel Maturity: Score each channel (search, social, display, etc.) across key pillars.

ACTION:

Identify gaps, prioritise fixes, and ensure your teams and tech are ready to respond, react, and reap the rewards.



BE DISCOVERABLE, BE BUYABLE

WHY IT MATTERS:

To be bought, you need to be seen – and in today's retail landscape, discoverability is everything. E-commerce is now the frontline of retail, and if your products aren't visible, they're not being considered.

SHORT-TERM FIXES:

01

Fix your feed:

Your product feed is the digital equivalent of getting stock out of the storeroom and onto the shop floor. If your feed isn't optimised, your products are invisible to shoppers, no matter how good your offer. We're experts in solving feed issues, which can be more common and impactful than you may realise!

02

CSS advantage:

If you're not using a CSS (Comparison Shopping Service) provider, you're missing a trick. Google gives you +20% bidding power when using a CSS provider – so every £1 you spend is worth £1.20. It's the closest thing to free money you'll get this side of Boxing Day.

60%

of Google ad clicks
are Google Shopping
clicks —your presence
is a present

GOOGLE
GIVES YOU

+20%

BIDDINGS POWER
WHEN USING
A CSS PROVIDER





LONG-TERM ROADMAP:

FEED OPTIMISATION FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Feed optimisation isn't a one-off job – it's an ongoing process that separates the leaders from the laggards. Brands who treat this as a continuous journey see sustained uplifts in clicks, ROAS, and social match rates.

THIS CAN DELIVER SIGNIFICANT RESULTS:

+88% increase in Google Shopping clicks

+66% increase in Google Shopping ROAS

+300% increase in Meta match rate

ACTION:

Start now to get a competitive edge by October.

MONTH

01

BENCHMARK

MONTH

02

TACKLE MAIN
DISAPPROVALS

MONTH

03

ALIGN CAMPAIGN
STRUCTURES WITH
CUSTOM LABELS

MONTH

04

SEGMENT CAMPAIGNS



“THE MOST EFFECTIVE BRANDS DON’T JUST RIDE THE RETAIL CALENDAR—THEY READ BETWEEN ITS LINES. THE REAL GAINS ARE FOUND IN THE OVERLOOKED MOMENTS, THE UNEXPECTED SURGES, AND THE SPACES WHERE OTHERS GO QUIET. IF YOU’RE ONLY PLANNING FOR CHRISTMAS NOW, YOU’RE ALREADY LATE.”



**REBECCA FRY,
MANAGING PARTNER,
FLYWHEEL, OMG UK**





THE NEW ERA OF DISCOVERY COMMERCE

TikTok isn't just a place for trends - it's a full-funnel commerce engine. If you think TikTok is just for brand awareness, think again:

64%

of users discover new brands and products on the platform

74%

are inspired to learn more about a brand or product

92%

take some form of action after seeing content

61%

have made a purchase either directly on TikTok or after seeing an ad

WHAT THIS MEANS:

- 01 Discovery is the new shop window:** If you're not on TikTok, you're missing a massive slice of your future customer base. It's where shoppers are discovering brands and products.
- 02 Content is your conversion tool:** Forget hard-sell ads – relatable, native, and actionable content is what drives sales on TikTok. The journey from inspiration to purchase is shorter than ever.
- 03 Action is the metric that matters:** TikTok isn't just about reach – it's about real results. With 92% of users taking action, the platform is a powerful driver of conversions.
- 04 Commerce is happening in-scroll:** 61% of users are buying directly within the app or after seeing an ad. TikTok Shop is a revenue stream, not just a trend – it's a fully integrated commerce experience.



THE NEW ERA OF DISCOVERY COMMERCE

HOW TO WIN AT DISCOVERY COMMERCE

01 MAKE UGC YOUR
SECRET WEAPON

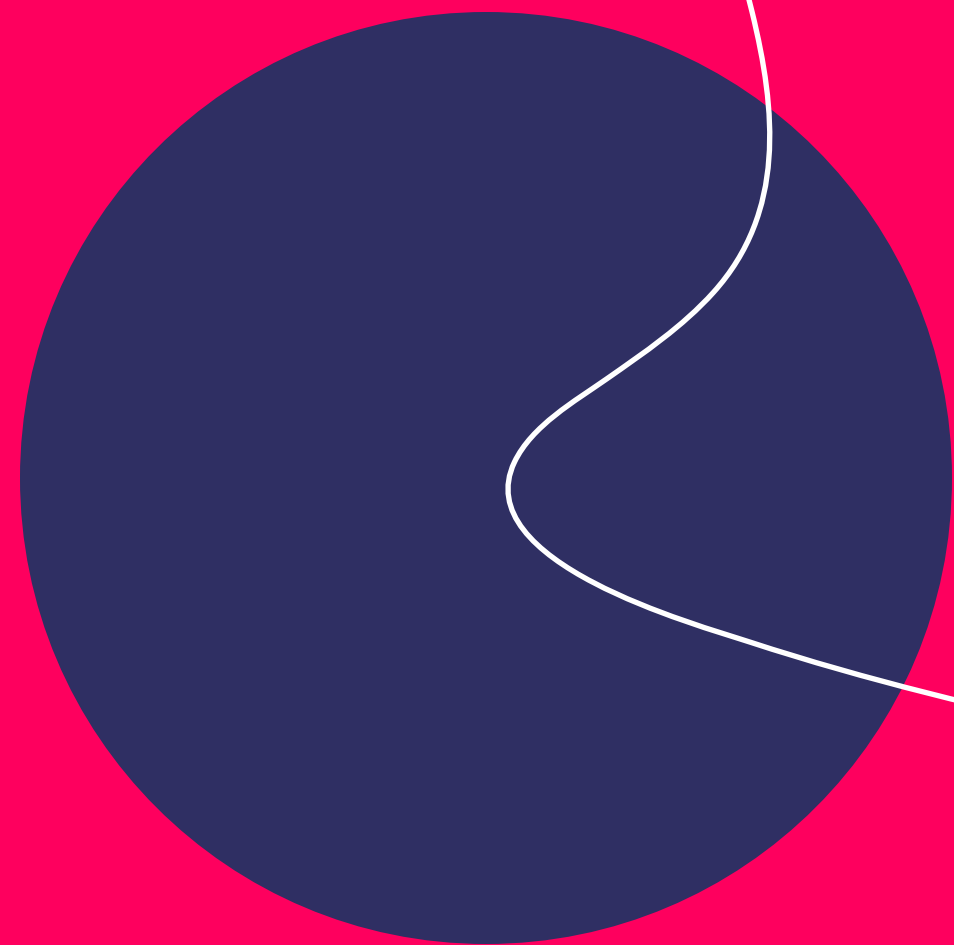
02 TELL STORIES,
DON'T JUST SELL

03 WORK WITH
MICRO-INFLUENCERS

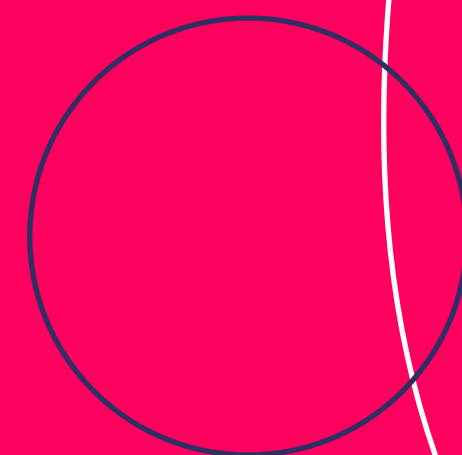
04 USE TIKTOK'S NATIVE
COMMERCE FEATURES

05 MOVE AT THE
SPEED OF TIKTOK





INCLUSIVE PLANNING





INCLUSIVITY

Inclusive Planning: Unlocking Growth with Diversity

Why inclusion matters now more than ever.

The Golden Half is the most competitive, costly, and crowded time of year. Brands are fighting for share of voice and every pound must work harder. But in the rush to stand out, it's easy to overlook the importance (and the business value) of diverse audiences, and their impact on UK's audience landscape.

**1 IN 4 PEOPLE
IN THE UK**

are from ethnic minority communities, rising to **30% under 40**

£375M MONTHLY

disposable income among ethnic minority communities

17%

of under-35s identify as LGBTQIA+; the community now represents **10% of ABC1 adults**

18%

of the working-age population is registered disabled, with **£274bn** in annual purchasing power among families with at least one disabled member

51%

of the UK population is non-Christian; Islam now accounts for **7% of the UK** (and 15% of London)



INCLUSION ISN'T JUST RIGHT IT'S GOOD FOR BUSINESS:

16% higher long-term sales

3.5% higher short-term sales

62% higher likelihood of being a consumer's first choice

15% higher customer loyalty

25% higher purchase intent (rising to 59% among 25–34s)

£1.7BN spent by multicultural consumers on Christmas Gifting per year

£758M spent by LGBTQIA+ consumers on Christmas Gifting per year





KEY CULTURAL MOMENTS:

Key cultural moments are an opportunity for brands to connect in a meaningful way across owned, earned and paid.

HEALTH

- 

World Alzheimer's Month
September
- 

World Suicide Prevention Day
10th September
- 

Breast Cancer Awareness Month
October
- 

Go Sober For October
- 

ADHD Month
October
- 

World Mental Health Day
10th October
- 

World Menopause Day
18th October
- 

Movember
- 

Disability History Month
16th Nov - 16th Dec

MULTICULTURAL

- 

South Asian Heritage Month
18th Jul - 17th Aug
- 

Devi Navrati (Hindu)
22nd Sep - 1st Oct
- 

Latin America Heritage Month
15th Sep - 15th Oct
- 

Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
22nd - 24th Sep
- 

Black History Month
October
- 

Dia de los Muertos
31st Oct - 2nd Nov
- 

Diwali
20th October
- 

Thanksgiving
27th November
- 

Chanukah/ Hanukah
14th - 22nd Dec
- 

Christmas Day
25th Dec
- 

Kwanzaa
26th Dec - 1st Jan

GENDER

- 

Brighton Pride
2nd - 3rd Aug
- 

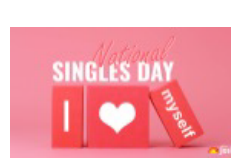
Manchester Pride
22nd - 25th Aug
- 

Bi-Visibility Day
23rd September
- 

International Lesbian Day
8th October
- 

National Coming Out Day
11th October
- 

Intersex Awareness Day
26th October
- 

Transgender Awareness Month
November
- 

Singles Day
11th November
- 

Pansexual Pride Day
8th December

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER



HOW TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE THIS GOLDEN HALF

01

CONSCIOUS INCLUSIVITY

Move from unconscious exclusion to conscious inclusion in your media planning.

REPRESENTATIVE CREATIVE:

Test your ads with diverse audiences to ensure everyone feels seen.

CELEBRATE CULTURES:

Authenticity matters. Communities notice when brands go the extra mile to represent them genuinely. In your creative, authentic details – like home decoration, food, and clothing – can make all the difference in consumers feeling seen and heard.

UNITE, DON'T DIVIDE:

Diverse advertising brings people together and builds brand equity.





02 DELIBERATE DIVERSITY

Go beyond “everyone welcome”
— actively target and create for diverse audiences.

DIVERSE MEDIA PLANNING:

Partner with diverse media owners and creators for authentic, high-impact content.

INCLUSIVE AUDIENCES:

Inclusive audiences - review your segmentation and media delivery to identify growth opportunities.

GROWTH MAPPING:

Use data, brand metrics and category spend to spot new growth opportunities for your brands, and cater to them through new partners.

PRO TIP:

The best results come from combining both approaches—unlocking new growth, spiking ad awareness, and driving consideration and purchase intent among desired audiences.

TIPS FOR INCLUSIVE PLANNING

1. Map growth opportunities among diverse audiences.
2. Sense-check your current plans for true reach and representation.
3. Test new partners and channels to unlock incremental reach.
4. Discover how to authentically engage with communities to unlock competitive advantage in our research.

Belonging in Britain:

Understanding Modern British Communities

**THIS IS THE SEASON
FOR INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY.
VARIETY AND NEW PERSPECTIVES
WILL SUPERCHARGE YOUR RESULTS.**



“WHEN YOU BUILD CAMPAIGNS THAT REFLECT THE REAL RICHNESS OF MODERN BRITAIN, YOU UNLOCK NEW AUDIENCES, DRIVE LOYALTY, AND FUTURE-PROOF YOUR BRAND. THE DATA IS CLEAR: INCLUSION DELIVERS RESULTS. MAKE IT CENTRAL TO YOUR GOLDEN HALF STRATEGY, AND YOU’LL SEE THE DIFFERENCE IN BOTH YOUR NUMBERS AND YOUR BRAND’S IMPACT.”

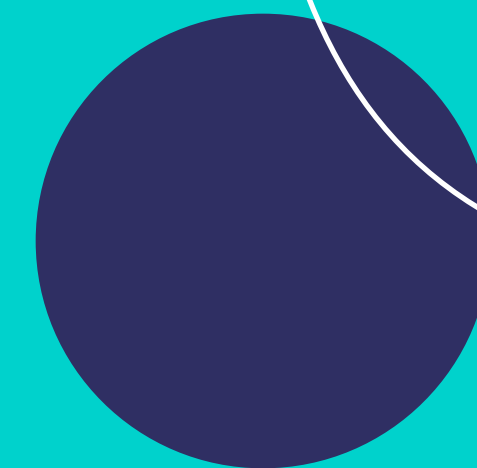


**JORDAN GOLDING,
PLANNING BUSINESS
DIRECTOR, DEI**





CONSCIOUS AT CHRISTMAS





WHERE MEANING MEETS GROWTH

The festive season is changing. For many, Christmas is no longer just about excess and indulgence, it's about making choices that matter. As shoppers become more conscious, brands have a unique opportunity to show up with real value and real values. The winners? Those who make sustainability tangible, not just talk.

THE SHIFT:

**1 IN 3
BRITS**

will avoid unsustainable practices this Christmas (fast fashion, next-day delivery, imported goods)

27%

plan to buy pre-loved party outfits for festive events

60%

are comfortable receiving a pre-loved present

38%

would gift a pre-loved present

WHY IT MATTERS:

Sustainability isn't a side note, it's a growth lever. The UK recommerce market (£6.5bn) is set to double in five years, with pre-loved gifts making up **over 10%** of Christmas presents this year.





WHERE MEANING MEETS GROWTH

HOW TO SHOW UP AUTHENTICALLY

- 01** **Go beyond surveys:** Use social listening and customer data to uncover unmet needs and pain points around sustainability. What are your customers actually struggling with?
- 02** **Reframe “value”:** Services as gifts (personal shopping, styling, home setup) show you understand their time is precious. Can you offer convenience, expertise, or peace of mind?
- 03** **Target the “conscious consumer”:** Sustainability isn’t just for Gen Z. Identify and engage older, affluent shoppers who are willing to pay a premium for ethical and eco-friendly options.



“TO TRULY CONNECT WITH CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS, BRANDS MUST EMBRACE CIRCULARITY, UNLOCK DUAL BENEFITS, AND SEIZE MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES THAT AMPLIFY THEIR COMMITMENT TO A BETTER FUTURE. BY DOING SO, THEY CAN DRIVE BOTH PURPOSE AND PROFIT.”



RUTH STERRY,
PLANNING BUSINESS
DIRECTOR



THE FUTURE IS GOLDEN





AI, AGENTS, AND THE NEW SEARCH REALITY

THE NEXT ERA OF RETAIL ISN'T JUST DIGITAL, IT'S INTELLIGENT.

AI is reshaping how people discover, choose, and buy, and nowhere is this more obvious than in the world of search. Google's latest moves signal a shift from human-led and dynamic to human-led, immersive, and agent-curated experiences. The search box is evolving - and so must your brand.

THE STAT THAT MATTERS:

BY 2030, 80% OF ONLINE TRAFFIC WILL BE DRIVEN BY AI AGENTS.

The brands that win the Golden Half of the future will be those who get ahead of this curve, not those who play catch-up.

WHAT DOES GEO MEAN FOR RETAILERS?

Consumers are already living in an agent-powered world. Brands that optimise for this new reality are rising above the noise—while those who don't risk being drowned out.



AI-POWERED AGENTS ARE EXPECTED TO DRIVE 80% OF ONLINE TRAFFIC BY 2030. TO WIN IN THIS NEW LANDSCAPE, BRANDS MUST BE DISCOVERABLE AND OPTIMISE FOR HUMANS AND AI. THINK BEYOND HOW CONSUMERS SEARCH, AND CONSIDER HOW AGENTS FIND, RECOMMEND, AND PERFORM DIGITAL TRANSACTIONS ON THEIR BEHALF. AUDIT YOUR DIGITAL PRESENCE. THE BRANDS THAT ACT EARLY AND EVOLVE WITH THESE NEW BEHAVIOURS WILL BE THE ONES LEADING THE GOLDEN HALF."



**SOPHIE LE,
HEAD OF SEARCH**



GEO STRATEGY: FOUR STAGES TO SUCCESS

SUCCESS IS BUILT AT THE INTERSECTION
BETWEEN HUMAN NEED AND MACHINE LOGIC

01

DISCOVER

Make your brand findable in an agent-first world—optimise for how AI and agents surface results, not just how humans search.

02

ENGAGE

Create immersive, interactive experiences that agents can understand and recommend.

03

CONVERT

Be visible across all touchpoints of the path from discovery to purchase, making it seamless for both humans and agents.

04

EVOLVE

Continuously learn and adapt.



“IN AN AGENT-POWERED SEARCH WORLD, TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE IS YOUR TICKET TO VISIBILITY. THIS IS NOW ESSENTIAL FOR GEO, HELPING AI AGENTS SURFACE YOUR BRAND FIRST. THE BRANDS THAT WE’RE SEEING WIN IN THIS SPACE ARE THE ONES INVESTING IN FRICTIONLESS, FAST, AND ACCESSIBLE DIGITAL EXPERIENCES.”



**JIMISHA THAKRAR,
HEAD OF ORGANIC PERFORMANCE**





WINNING IN THE GOLDEN HALF





YOUR ACTION TOOLKIT FOR H2

**THE GOLDEN HALF IS WON BY THOSE WHO PLAN SMARTER,
MOVE FASTER, AND EXECUTE WITH PRECISION.**

HERE'S YOUR TOOLKIT:

The frameworks, checklists, and pro tips to turn insight into action and own every moment.



GOLDEN RULES FOR THE GOLDEN HALF

The Golden Half demands bold thinking. Here's how to stay ahead of the competition:

01

EXPLOIT THE CHANGE IN CONTEXT

H2 is the only time of year when consumers actively care about advertising. Don't waste it on wallpaper. Tease, reveal, and make every moment count. If you're not creating anticipation, you're missing a trick.

02

BUILD MOMENTUM EARLY

Q3 isn't a warm-up—it's your launchpad. The brands that win start building mental availability before the Christmas noise. Adstock matters: the earlier you start, the more you compound.

03

DON'T JUST PLAY THE HITS

Christmas is crowded. The real growth is in the moments your competitors ignore—Diwali, Twixmas, January "fresh start." Find the white space and own it.

04

HOLD YOUR NERVE, BUT BAKE IN AGILITY

Maximum return comes from sticking with your plan, but the best teams scenario-plan and pivot fast when the data shifts. Test and learn in H1, execute in H2, and always have a Plan B (and C).

05

GET COSY—COLLABORATION WINS

Physical proximity and regular, ego-free check-ins across teams (client, agency, creative, platforms) drive better, faster decisions. The best results come from teams who leave egos at the door and work as one.

06

MAKE INCLUSIVITY A GROWTH LEVER

Diversity isn't just a box-tick - it's a business advantage. Map your audience, sense-check your plans, and partner with diverse creators. The brands that reflect modern Britain win modern Britain.

07

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

Retail media is only as good as its measurement. Work with your partners on transparency and closed-loop reporting.



QUESTIONS FOR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

The most successful retail leaders don't just follow best practice, they interrogate their plans, challenge their teams, and look for blind spots before the competition does.

Use these questions to spark the conversations that matter most in your boardroom. If you can answer each with confidence - and evidence - you're set to lead. If not, you've just found your next area of focus.

01 ARE YOU MAPPING YOUR BRAND'S PRESENCE ACROSS EVERY KEY H2 MOMENT, NOT JUST CHRISTMAS?

Where are you showing up that your competitors aren't?

02 HOW ARE YOU BALANCING DIGITAL AND IN-PERSON MEDIA TO MATCH REAL CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR?

Recent data shows high street footfall is up 4.1% year-on-year as of May 2025 (BRC 2025) and late-stage buyers are increasingly making final decisions in-store. Are your plans built for both screens and streets?

03 IS YOUR RETAIL MEDIA INVESTMENT DELIVERING CLOSED-LOOP MEASUREMENT AND REAL ROI?

Are you optimising spend based on what's actually driving sales, not just impressions?

04 DOES YOUR CREATIVE AND MEDIA PLAN REFLECT THE DIVERSITY AND REALITY OF MODERN BRITAIN?

Are you reaching and resonating with all your growth audiences, or just the usual suspects?



05 DO YOU HAVE SCENARIO PLANS AND RAPID-RESPONSE TEAMS IN PLACE FOR WHEN (NOT IF) THINGS CHANGE?

How quickly can you pivot if the market shifts, a competitor moves, or consumer sentiment changes overnight?

06 WHAT'S THE ONE MOMENT OR AUDIENCE YOUR COMPETITORS ARE IGNORING THAT YOU COULD OWN?

Are you actively seeking out white space, or just following the crowd?

07 ARE YOU LEARNING FROM H1 AND APPLYING THOSE LESSONS IN REAL TIME?

What did you test, what did you learn, and how are you using that to sharpen your Golden Half approach?

08 ARE YOU PLANNING TO WIN IN TWIXMAS AND JANUARY, NOT JUST WIND DOWN AFTER CHRISTMAS?

How are you capitalising on the “fresh start” mindset and high media consumption post-Christmas?





GOLDEN HALF IN ACTION:

**THEORY IS GOOD.
SEEING IS BETTER.**

Standout campaigns and creative media strategies
that won big in the Golden Half.





WAITROSE SWEET SUSPICION

CHALLENGE:

Despite outperforming its market position, Waitrose faces fierce Christmas competition. And in 2023, record media investment from competitors, meant we couldn't win by being louder.

So, in 2024 our goal was clear, a healthy sales growth target, and to increase our NPS. We needed a solution to boost excitement, get the nation talking, and maintain momentum during key sales weeks.

THE BIG IDEA:

We treated the ads like a captivating ITV drama. Unique access to ITV talent and top airtime, put Waitrose right where our audience was already hooked. We kept the nation guessing for three weeks, with custom trailers, 'This Morning' hosts fuelling the mystery on air and across socials, and the final reveal saved for a blockbuster slot in 'I'm A Celeb'.

MAKING IT HAPPEN:

- **Two-Part TV Mystery:** A missing dessert, a nation of armchair detectives, and a story that unfolded across November
- **Cultural Conversation:** The campaign became a Christmas event, with viewers speculating and sharing theories across social and broadcast
- **Consumer Conversation:** Waitrose dominated the spaces people love at Christmas—ITV, social, and in-store—by partnering with the UK's drama experts
- **Media Partnership:** ITV's reach (71% of the UK) and cultural cachet made it the perfect platform to accelerate fame and exc





WAITROSE SWEET SUSPICION

LEARNINGS:

- 01** Turn your campaign into an event:
Don't just advertise—create cultural moments that get the nation talking.
- 02** Leverage media partnerships for impact:
Go where your audience is already engaged, and use talent and formats that feel native to the platform.
- 03** Sustain momentum:
Keep the conversation alive over weeks, not days, to maximise mental availability and sales impact.



“WAITROSE DIDN'T TRY TO OUTSPEND THE COMPETITION - THEY OUT-THOUGHT THEM. BY TURNING THEIR AD INTO A NATIONAL MYSTERY, WE MADE CHRISTMAS ADVERTISING FEEL FRESH, RELEVANT, AND IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE.

THE RESULT? RECORD ENGAGEMENT, RECORD SALES, AND A BLUEPRINT FOR HOW TO WIN WHEN THE NOISE IS DEAFENING.”

JANE RIDEHALGH, BUSINESS DIRECTOR

RESULTS:

259.5M
social impressions

71%
excited for
Part Two Reveal

61%
discussed the
campaign with others





JOHN LEWIS 'MY SONNET'

CHALLENGE:

Even icons must evolve. As the UK's most beloved Christmas advertiser, John Lewis has long set the standard for festive campaigns. But with younger audiences shifting away from traditional TV and budgets under pressure, the challenge was clear: how do you keep the magic alive, sustain momentum, and stay top of mind in a rapidly changing media landscape?

THE BIG IDEA:

So, in 2024 John Lewis took a bold step forward. Instead of relying solely on the power of TV, the brand invited the nation to “extend the magic” by making the Christmas campaign participatory. By leveraging the iconic “My Sonnet” by Richard Ashcroft and partnering with TikTok, John Lewis transformed its Christmas ad from a one-way broadcast into a dynamic, interactive event—inviting everyone to create their own version of the song and become part of the story.

MAKING IT HAPPEN:

- **Rapid Collaboration:** Securing the rights to “My Sonnet” just 11 days before launch required seamless teamwork across client, agency, and music partners—demonstrating true agility and commitment.
- **Social-First Activation:** TikTok became the campaign's creative engine, with branded effects and top creators driving a wave of user-generated content and engagement.
- **Fan-First Finale:** The campaign's crowning moment—Richard Ashcroft himself selected a fan's rendition to soundtrack a John Lewis TV spot on Christmas Day, turning a viewer into a star and deepening the brand's connection with its audience.





JOHN LEWIS 'MY SONNET'

LEARNINGS:

01

Evolve to stay iconic:

Even the most established brands must innovate to remain relevant and top of mind.

02

Make your audience the hero:

Participation and co-creation drive deeper engagement and longer-lasting momentum.

03

Agility is a competitive advantage:

Rapid collaboration and bold thinking can unlock new opportunities—even under tight timelines.



JOHN LEWIS SHOWED THAT TRUE LEADERSHIP MEANS EVOLVING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE. BY INVITING THE NATION TO JOIN IN, THEY DIDN'T JUST EXTEND THE MAGIC, THEY FUTURE-PROOFED IT. THE RESULT? A CAMPAIGN THAT DELIVERED CULTURAL IMPACT, BUSINESS RESULTS, AND A NEW BLUEPRINT FOR FESTIVE ENGAGEMENT."



DUNCAN TIMLIN,
BUSINESS DIRECTOR

RESULTS:

41M+ VIEWS & 9.5M UNIQUE REACH

in just over two weeks

1000+ ENTRIES

to the branded effect on TikTok

6+ WEEKS

of sustained buzz, ongoing brand visibility and consideration well beyond the initial TVC launch

WINNER'S SONG HIT #20 ON APPLE MUSIC'S NEW IN POP, 25% SAVE RATE ON SPOTIFY, AND WAS HEARD BY 2M ADULTS ON CHRISTMAS DAY



RETAIL GOLD





WE HOPE MG'S GUIDE TO THE GOLDEN HALF HAS SPARKED NEW IDEAS AND SHARPENED YOUR FOCUS FOR THE MONTHS AHEAD.

If there's one thing to take away, it's this: the brands that win don't just react to the season—they redefine it. The Golden Half is your runway for growth, innovation, and deeper connection with your customers.

REMEMBER:

01

REDEFINE THE SEASON:

The brands that win don't just react to the season — they redefine it. The Golden Half is your runway for growth, innovation, and deeper connection with your customers.

02

IT'S BIGGER THAN CHRISTMAS:

Six months of shifting rhythms, new rituals, and untapped potential.

03

DATA AND RETAIL MEDIA ARE YOUR EDGE:

Use them to cut through the noise and create real value.

04

PREPARATION IS POWER:

The leaders are those who plan with agility, creativity, and purpose.

05

SUSTAINABILITY AND INCLUSIVITY AREN'T TRENDS, THEY'RE TABLE STAKES:

Show up authentically, and your customers will notice.



HERE'S TO CREATING DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS AND A **STANDOUT** SEASON AHEAD.

REFRAMING THIS PART OF THE YEAR ISN'T JUST ABOUT KEEPING UP, IT'S ABOUT SETTING THE PACE. WITH THE RIGHT MINDSET AND THE RIGHT MOVES, THE GOLDEN HALF CAN BE YOUR BRAND'S DEFINING MOMENT.





GET IN TOUCH TO FIND OUT MORE



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ABOUT MG OMD

MG OMD was founded in 1990 as an independent agency (Manning Gottlieb Media), born out of an overarching ambition to be recognised for producing great media work and to think as differently as possible about media. We were acquired by leading network Omnicom in 1998, becoming part of OMG (Omnicom Media Group). Since then, we have retained the UK focused expertise and bespoke client approaches of an independent, with all of the brilliance that the OMG network affords us; helping MG OMD become the second-largest media agency in the UK.

We are a team of over 565 people who are focused on delivering innovative, effective, and award-winning work and campaigns which create difference that matters for our clients, including the John Lewis Partnership, HM Government, British Airways, Specsavers, Virgin Media O2 and SharkNinja.

MG OMD is the most awarded media agency in the history of the IPA Effectiveness Awards. In 2024 we had an unprecedented year for recognition; winning 100% of the Best Agency accolades; Campaign's Global Media Agency of the Year, The Media Leader's Agency of the Year, Media Week's Agency of the Year and Campaign's Media Agency of the Year – which we have been awarded again in 2025. This year has also seen us win Gold at Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity for Media: Channel Integration.



ABOUT FLYWHEEL

Flywheel operates a leading cloud-based digital commerce platform across the world's major digital marketplaces. It enables our clients to access near real-time performance measurement and improve sales, share, and profit. Through its expertise, scale, global reach, and highly sophisticated AI and data-powered solutions, Flywheel provides differentiated value for both the world's largest consumer product companies and fast-growing brands. These solutions can be tailored from pure self-service software to outsourced management of digital commerce marketplace operations and everything in between.



THANK YOU

MG omd

