

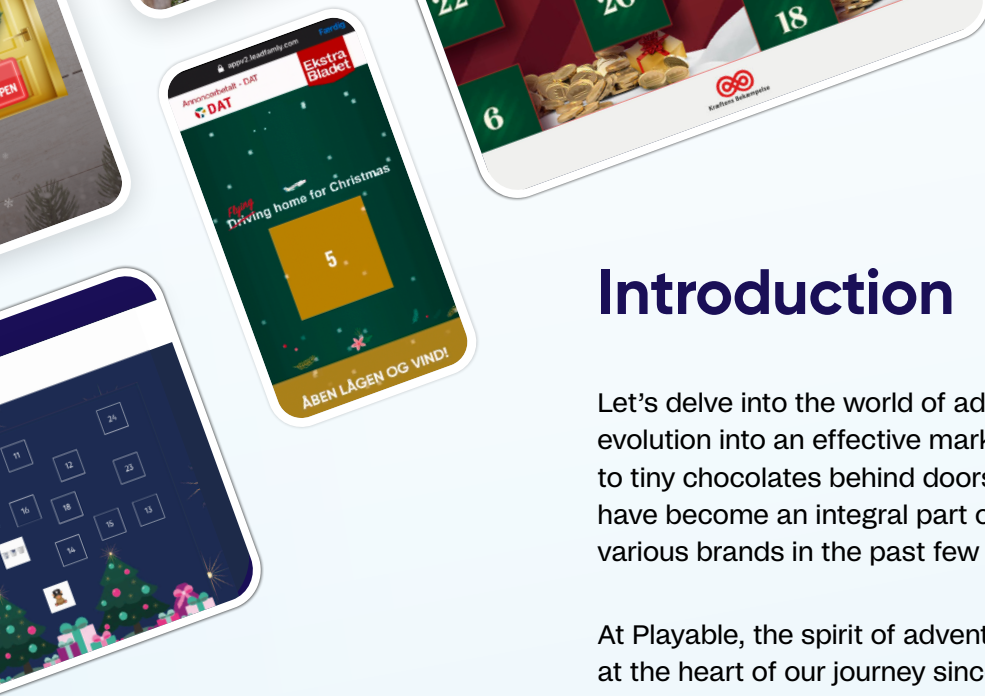
# 5 ways to use an advent calendar for marketing success

**playable**



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# Introduction

Let's delve into the world of advent calendars and their evolution into an effective marketing tactic. No longer confined to tiny chocolates behind doors in a box, advent calendars have become an integral part of the digital holiday strategies of various brands in the past few years.

At Playable, the spirit of advent calendar campaigns has been at the heart of our journey since we started in 2017 - in fact, the advent calendar was our very first game type!

So, when it comes to building advent calendar campaigns that drive success, we like to think we know a thing or two. In this guide, we have gathered the most important tips & tricks, so you get actionable insights for your own calendar campaign success!

Let's dive in!

## Chapter 1


# The many marketing purposes of an advent calendar campaign

Whatever your objectives for creating an online advent calendar, here we provide more detail on 5 of their main marketing purposes. We also showcase examples of real brands that have effectively deployed calendars for these specific purposes and the strategies they used!

## Purpose 1: Awareness

When it comes to making your brand stand out in the bustling digital landscape that is the Christmas and festive holiday season, an online advent calendar can be your secret weapon for creating awareness. By strategically sharing your calendar through both organic and paid social media channels, along with offering a sneak peek of enticing prizes, you have the power to captivate the attention of online browsers like never before. These initial attention-grabbing posts set the stage for something greater – a genuine first touchpoint with your potential audience.

Once you've piqued their interest, your advent calendar can serve as a dynamic tool for educating your new audience about your brand and the range of products or services you offer, using for example quiz questions behind your calendar doors. This way, your calendar becomes an interactive storytelling platform, allowing you to weave your brand narrative and values throughout the holiday season.

 In 2022, over **420 advent calendars** were built using the Playable platform, contributing to a remarkable average of over **52,000 sessions per calendar**. This illustrates the incredible potential of calendar campaigns in generating widespread awareness. Each visit to your calendar represents a meaningful touchpoint with potential customers, making it a substantial campaign for brand awareness.





## LEGOLAND

LEGOLAND Billund Resort, a well-established theme park in Denmark, used their online advent calendar campaign to achieve remarkable results in generating awareness and engagement. Facing the challenges of a reduced subscriber database due to GDPR and the off-season closure of the park from November to March, LEGOLAND embraced an innovative approach to make sure they had memorability and top-of-mind awareness with their audience. They used an advent calendar campaign that was promoted, amongst other channels, on Facebook using video ads.

**2+ millions**

in organic Facebook reach

**680,000**

video views

**30,000**

newsletter sign-ups



[Read the full LEGOLAND story](#)

## Flying home for Christmas - Ekstra Bladet

[Ekstra Bladet](#), a news publisher, is well-known in Denmark for providing native advertising space on their website. In 2022, in partnership with DAT, a Danish airline, they decided to test how gamification could help brands generate more awareness using their native advertising space. That's where the advent calendar campaign called "Flying home for Christmas" was born. During December, this playable campaign was seen on the home page of Ekstra Bladet, succeeding in generating a very impressive amount of traffic to DAT's website!

**120.000**

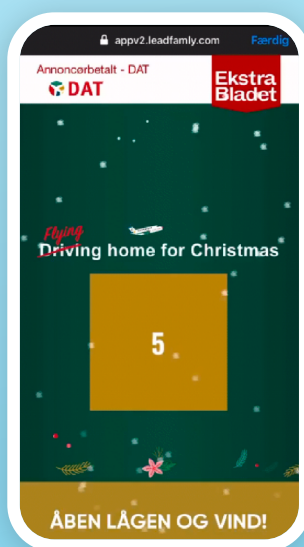
clicks in 24 days

**42,000**

registrations

**Silver Award 2022**

at the Native Advertising Awards




[Read the full Ekstra Bladet story](#)

## Purpose 2: Acquisition

Acquisition is a broad term, encompassing activities such as gathering permissions, boosting sales, enhancing ROI, and more. A well-constructed advent calendar has the potential to fulfill all of these objectives.

### 1. Collecting permissions

If the primary goal of your advent calendar is to gain marketing permissions, adding a lead form strategically before people can open your calendar doors - and then implementing features like enticing prizes, leaderboards, and captivating games can be highly effective in boosting your registration rate. This approach nudges visitors to actively participate and complete the lead form, to collect new marketing permissions.

 The stats don't lie! The **average amount of registrations** on our platform tally up to an impressive **43,795 per calendar**. This is **10x higher than our platform average** for other types of games. The advent calendar emerges as a standout game concept for collecting marketing permissions.



## 2. Increasing sales

Boosting end-of-the-year sales is another pivotal role your advent calendar can take! 2 effective methods are:

- **By sharing discounts & special offers**

Use your calendar to offer deals and discounts behind the daily or weekly doors. For instance, you can present a unique discount each day, or even offer a discount code reward to all participants who achieve a high enough score, of a skill game, like Snake. This way, you nudge participants to redeem their discount code on your website, or even in your physical stores if your goal is to drive footfall.

- **Leveraging Email Marketing**

Another way is activating the new leads you acquired from your advent calendar with email nurture flows. For example, you can send emails to showcase Christmas gift ideas, exclusive Holiday deals, and enticing discounts.

*Psst. While December is an opportune time as everyone is doing their Christmas shopping, you could also consider teasing your January sales or promotions to kickstart the new year with strong revenue figures.*

## 3. Boost omnichannel

Some brands employ their advent calendars to drive in-store traffic during December. They strategically placed incentives behind the calendar doors, offering prizes such as samples or consultation appointments that can be redeemed at their physical stores. This proved highly effective in motivating calendar participants to visit the stores, with the hope of making additional purchases during their visit.

## 4. Improve ROI

Given the versatility of advent calendars in achieving various marketing objectives in one single campaign, it's common for brands to experience a robust return-on-investment (ROI) with their calendar campaigns. This not only enhances their overall ROI but also provides an opportunity to bolster performance before the end-of-the-year reporting!





## Søstrene Grene

Søstrene Grene, a Danish retail chain known for its unique ambiance and extensive range of products, embraced the Advent Calendar concept to generate new leads and boost sales during the Christmas season. Søstrene Grene's advent calendar featured a daily quiz question related to Søstrene Grene's products, Scandinavian design, or the brand's core values. So, not only did they succeed in gaining new marketing permissions, and boosting sales, but they also got the chance to share their USPs to their target audience.

**44K+**

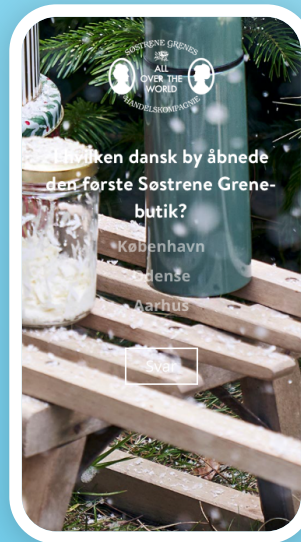
subscribers to their newsletter

**15%**

of the subscribers became customers

**4000+ hours**

spent with Søstrene Grene



[Read the full Søstrene Grene story](#)

### Purpose 3: Engagement

An advent calendar campaign doesn't have to be only about direct revenue impact; it can also simply be a tool for engaging your audience in a fun and memorable way. By incorporating fun and interactivity behind your calendar's doors, you can enhance the time your audience spends with your brand, nurturing a deeper connection. For instance, employing diverse game mechanics like competing (i.e. using a leaderboard), having fun (i.e. using a skill game such as snake or drop game) can extend participants' daily interactions with your calendar. This not only ensures frequent return visits but also strengthens brand image by creating a positive and memorable interactive experience that keeps your audience coming back for more surprises and engagement throughout December.

✧ ✧ The **advent calendar game** stands out as one of the most engaging game types on our platform, boasting an impressive **game play repetition average of 5.36 times** - proving how engaging it is. In comparison, our platform's average game repetition across all game types is 1.96, making the calendar game a **63% higher engagement rate**.



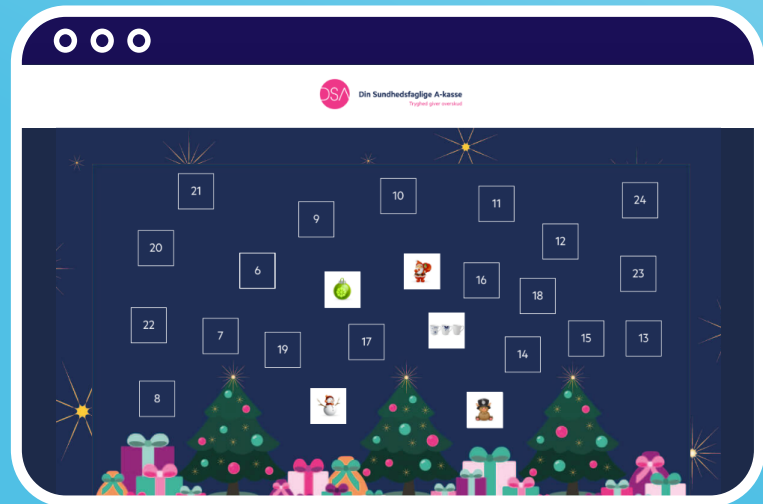
## Din Sundhedsfaglige A-kasse

For several years, [Din Sundhedsfaglige A-kasse](#), a Danish insurance fund, had been running a Christmas Calendar campaign on Facebook – with around 650 participants per day. However, in 2021, after gamifying their calendar using the Playable platform, participation skyrocketed to an average of 6,580 daily participants – an impressive 6.5x increase. This change, although simple in concept, of using a gamification platform to create a digital advent calendar where participants can actually open the doors daily, and engage with the experience behind the door, not only increases participation, but also resulted in engaging their members like never before.

**6000+**  
participants per day  
(**6.5x higher** than before  
gamifying their calendar)

**220K+**  
sessions

**16K+**  
unique registrations



[Read the full Din Sundhedsfaglige A-kasse story](#)

*“I almost fell off my chair when I saw the results. The Christmas Calendar performed extremely well, with crazy exposure – 6.5 times more than the year before.”*

**Mie Bertelsen,**  
Communication Consultant at Din Sundhedsfaglige A-kasse

## Purpose 4: Retention

Customer retention involves motivating existing customers to make additional and repeated purchases and ensuring they continue to choose your brand rather than switching to competitors. There are various approaches to achieving this goal using advent calendars:

### 1. Capture consumer data - to help with repeated purchases

One approach is to gather more comprehensive data about your customers. For instance, by knowing their product or brand preferences, profession, family size, and more, you can personalize your marketing strategies and deliver tailored offers. Your advent calendar can serve as an incremental data collection tool in two ways: through the registration form and through the games you can have behind the doors.

When using the registration form, an idea could be to aim to keep it concise each day while gradually adding new questions and removing others. For example, on December 1, you could ask for the first name, last name, and email address. On December 5, you might ask for first name, email, and birthday. And so on. This way, you keep the registration form concise, which is the best way to get the highest registration rate possible, but you also ensure you collect lots of valuable data points throughout the entire duration of your advent calendar campaign.

Another effective method involves using engaging games behind your calendar doors that facilitate data collection, such as personality tests, quizzes, swipe it, polls, etc. For instance, you could create a playful “Which Grinch character are you?” personality test, delving into participants’ Christmas gift-giving intentions. Alternatively, use a swipe it game like “Swipe left or right to indicate your interest in receiving this item as a Christmas gift.” At the end, allow participants to share their liked items with loved ones as a Christmas wish list. This could help you not only gather valuable preference data but also drive sales, creating a win-win situation.

## 2. Owned media acquisition

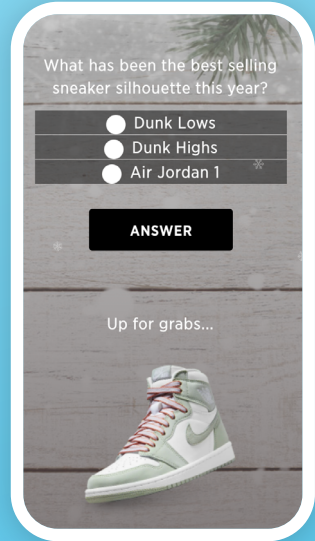
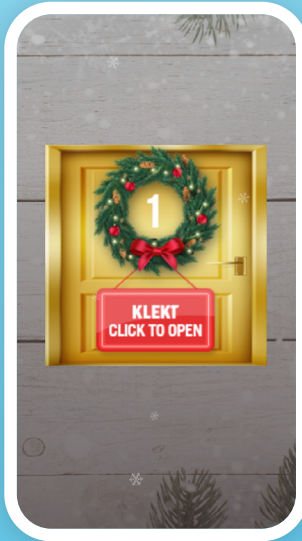
Another way to boost retention is by increasing your owned media acquisition, which can include your app users, community members, and social media followers. You can use your calendar as an incentive; for instance, making the calendar available directly and exclusively through your app can be a great way to attract and retain new app users. Similarly, granting early access to community members or social media followers can also be an incentive to get new community members and social media followers.



## KLEKT

[Klekt](#), a European sneaker marketplace, wanted to encourage their customers to make repeat purchases on their website. They knew that buying limited edition sneakers wasn't an everyday thing, so they came up with a clever campaign idea: an advent calendar. So, during December, Klekt created a 12-day Advent Calendar. Each day, customers answered a question for a chance to win prizes like store credit, mystery sneakers, and exclusive items. The simple and engaging Christmas calendar worked very well with their audience and got them to come back daily to open new calendar doors and be in with a chance to win prizes.

**11K**  
registrations  
**54%**  
of participants were still  
engaged 12 months later  
**Effectively  
increased**  
repeated sales



[Read the full KLEKT story](#)

## Purpose 5: Loyalty

Loyalty often develops through consistently delivering exceptional experiences to your customers, from offering excellent products, outstanding customer service, and consistently meeting or exceeding their expectations. While there are many ways to foster loyalty, here's how your advent calendar can contribute to this goal.

### 1. Educate better

Your calendar can effectively be used as a tool to educate your customers about the impactful initiatives from your company. This could include your commitment to using sustainable materials, your philanthropic efforts, and more. Additionally, a calendar campaign is a great opportunity to enlighten your audience about your product's unique selling points (USPs) or your brand's history and image. You can do this by including quiz questions behind the doors of your advent calendar, for example.

### 2. Increase owned media usage

Your calendar can serve as a powerful tool to entice potential customers into joining your community, following your social media accounts, or downloading your app. However, it can also be used to engage users and members already within your owned media. For instance, embedding your calendar within your app ensures users return frequently to unveil each day's content. Furthermore, offering an exclusive VIP calendar solely for your members can enhance their satisfaction and loyalty.

The distinction lies in how you utilize your calendar. Instead of leveraging it as an external promotional tool to attract new members, app users, or social media followers, you deploy it as a token of appreciation for your most devoted advocates. You craft an exclusive advent calendar tailored for your existing members, which you can directly promote within your app, communities, or via your VIP email list. This initiative aims to express gratitude to your most loyal customers, offering them valuable gifts and engaging experiences as a heartfelt thank-you gesture.

## Danish Cancer Society

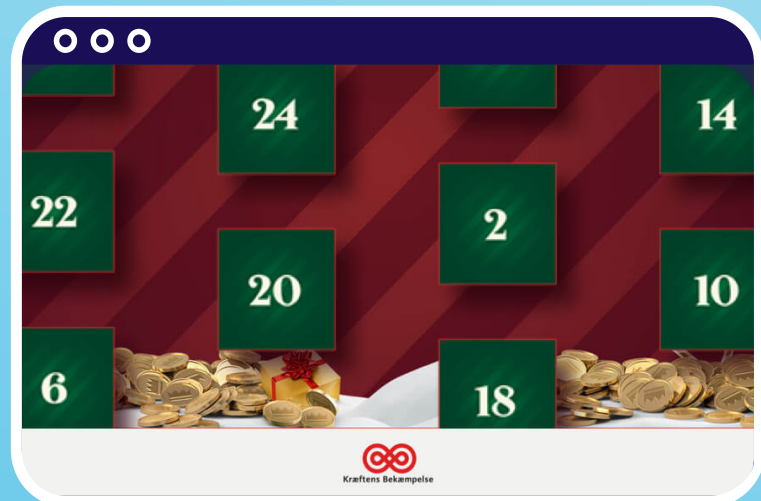
Kræftens Bekæmpelse, the Danish Cancer Society, sought an engaging approach to educate their members and fundraise for their noble cause. They introduced a daily Advent Calendar, providing an opportunity for their members to be reminded and delve into Kræftens Bekæmpelse’s mission during the first three weeks of December.

The Calendar was a tremendous success for Kræftens Bekæmpelse, resulting in lots of clicks and leads. Additionally, it drove significant traffic to the Cancer Helpline website, with 1,872 visits during the weekend when the Calendar featured a question about the helpline (they usually get 20 visits a day). This influx of visitors also led to increased phone calls to the helpline over that weekend.

**51,400**  
unique registrations

**25,000**  
new leads

Average of **15,000**  
daily participants



[w](#)

*“A gamification campaign like the Advent Calendar gives us a way to deliver important content in an engaging way. Not only can we educate our audience once, but we get the chance to do it for 24 days in a row.”*

**Andreas Brinch, Digital Marketing Specialist, Kræftens Bekæmpelse**



## Chapter 2

# 10 very important tips

Now that we've provided insights on how you can use your Advent Calendar for various marketing purposes and have hopefully inspired you with different tactics along the way, we want to highlight 10 crucial tips for you to keep in mind when designing your Advent calendar campaign.

### 1. **Decide on a primary objective:**

It's important to note that your Advent calendar campaign can have multiple purposes, and you can track multiple KPIs. However, having one primary objective, along with 2 or 3 secondary ones, will help you maintain a streamlined user experience.

### 2. **Keep it simple:**

While offering different games each day from December 1st to Christmas might seem enticing, it can also become complex and time-consuming. This complexity places greater pressure on achieving outstanding results for a desirable ROI.

### 3. **Start planning early:**

Simplicity is often best, but an advent calendar will still involve many options and considerations. Therefore, it's crucial to start planning and implementing well in advance.

### 4. **Use a pre-launch campaign:**

Don't wait until December 1st to promote your calendar and gain marketing permissions. Create a pre-launch teaser campaign and encourage people to sign up ahead of time to receive your advent calendar.

### 5. **Use an autosubmit feature:**

Avoid having participants fill in the registration form each time they access your calendar. Implement an auto-submit feature so that their contact details are automatically populated, requiring only a single click to submit.

### 6. **Prepare a killer promotion strategy:**

Even if you have an amazing Advent calendar, failure to promote it effectively may lead to disappointing results. Invest in a strong promotion strategy to maximize engagement.

### 7. **Send daily or weekly reminders:**

Schedule and send reminder emails every time a new door opens, whether on a daily or weekly basis, depending on your calendar format.

### 8. **Set tracking pixels:**

To gain comprehensive insights into the results of your advent calendar campaigns, implement tracking pixels. This allows you to trace participants' journeys before they arrive to your calendar and where they go after leaving it.

### 9. **Choose your prizes wisely:**

Contrary to popular belief, extravagant prizes every day are not necessary for success. Often, it's more about the overall experience. Some calendar campaigns with smaller prizes or just one prize draw on December 24th can still achieve remarkable results.

### 10. **Monitor in real-time:**

Since most advent calendars run throughout December, monitor the results in real-time. This flexibility allows you to make adjustments if needed while the campaign is still up and running.

## Ready, set, go!

As we conclude our exploration of advent calendar campaigns for marketing, it's evident that advent calendars can be tailored to fit your specific marketing objectives.

Playable has been at the forefront of digital advent calendar innovation since our beginnings in 2017, making us your trusted partner in crafting successful holiday campaigns. In this guide, we've shared valuable tips, real-world case studies, and actionable strategies to ensure your advent calendar's success.

But there's more. For Christmas this year, we offer a limited-time offer you won't want to miss!

[Learn more](#)



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