BANK OF AMERICA

tsg

2026 Gift Card Guide:
How to Prepare and Win This Holiday Season

Gift card purchases are a planned and intentional way for consumers to give meaningful gifts this holiday season. Enhance your gift card program now to get ahead of holiday demand and maximize revenue this season.

Consumers Plan Ahead —So Demand Starts Early

- Gift cards are built into budgets and planned in advance —not last-minute purchases
- The majority are purchased specifically for the holiday season

Because consumers plan early, purchasing decisions are made before peak season—creating a clear window for merchants to influence demand.

89%

Plan ahead and budget for holiday gift card purhcases

Early Planning Leads to Strong Preference

Nearly 3 in 4 holiday gift buyers prefer to purchase gift cards as opposed to merchandise.

93%

Of buyers say gift cards give their recipients choice in how to spend their gift amount

Flexibility and choice make them a top gift option

When shoppers plan ahead, they actively choose gift cards—not as a fallback, but as a preferred and reliable gift.

Strong Preference Drives High Satisfaction

High satisfaction reinforces future purchase behavior—making gift cards a consistent and repeatable driver of demand.

96%

of consumers are satisfied with gift cards—on par with or better than traditional gifts

High Satisfaction Leads to Fast Usage

Consumers redeem quickly, often spending beyond the card value—bringing them back sooner than other gift types.

87%

Used holiday gift cards by February

Fast Usage Creates Immediate Revenue Impact

- Drives near-term revenue
- Encourages incremental spend beyond the card value
- Brings customers back both in-store and online

Gift cards are not just seasonal—they are a core driver of retail performance and customer engagement.

Act Now to Capture Holiday Demand

- Consumers are already planning their holiday purchases
- Demand will be shaped before peak season begins
- Merchants who act early are best positioned to win

Gift cards drive near-term revenue, encourage repeat spend beyond the card value, and bring customers back both in-store and online. With high usage within the first few months, they provide a reliable way to accelerate revenue and strengthen customer engagement—**making them a critical strategy for winning this holiday season.**

*Bank of America and TSG's 2026 gift card report provides a full-year view of consumers' actual 2025 purchasing behavior.

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