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COMMERCE MEDIA HOLIDAY PLAYBOOK

Your one-stop-shop for planning across digital shelf, content, retail ops, and media to maximize holiday sales

Win the Season with a Holiday-Ready Commerce Media Program

Skai has mapped out priorities from October through December to guide your holiday planning and execution, helping you maximize sales during the busiest shopping season of the year. Inside, you'll find strategy and best practices across:

- Retail media
- GenAI solution Celeste
- Digital shelf
- Content optimization
- Retail operations

TLDR?

- Efficiency Tip: Automate what you can (alerts, reports, keyword harvesting). Every hour saved is an hour spent on strategy.
- Sales Tip: Double down on promotions, bidding, and retargeting. These levers move revenue fastest.

Ready for more? Follow along for pro tips to keep your brand retail-ready and performance strong through the busiest shopping season of the year.

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Playbook navigation

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Dates to look out for &
strategic recommendations

MONTH-TO-MONTH STRATEGY

SEPTEMBER

Finalize your holiday strategy

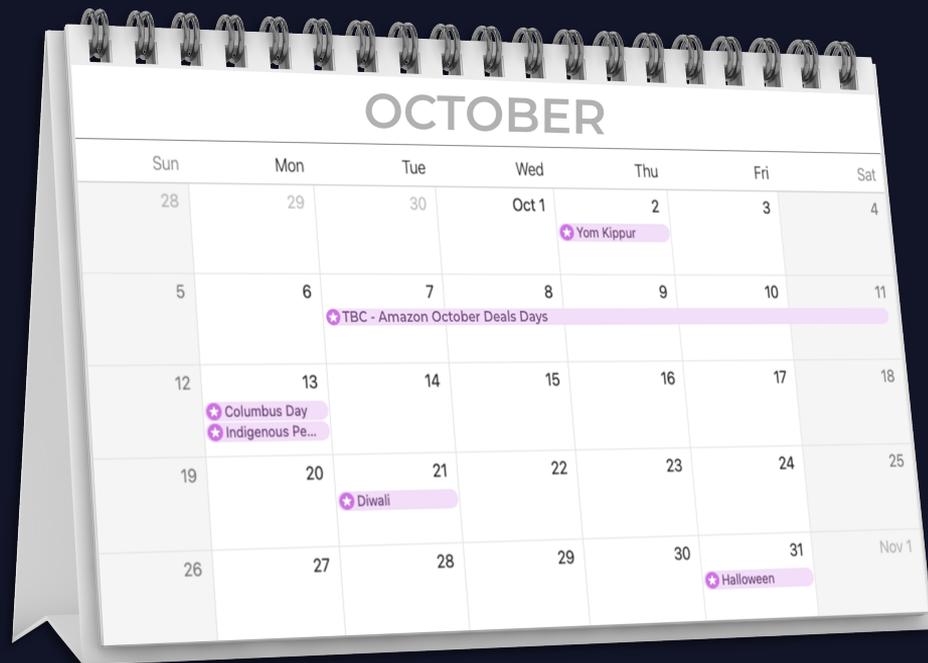| SEPTEMBER						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31	Sep 1 ⭐ Labor Day ⭐ Back-to-School & -College	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 ⭐ Rosh Hashanah	24 ⭐ Rosh Hashana...	25	26	27
28	29	30	Oct 1	2 ⭐ Yom Kippur	3	4
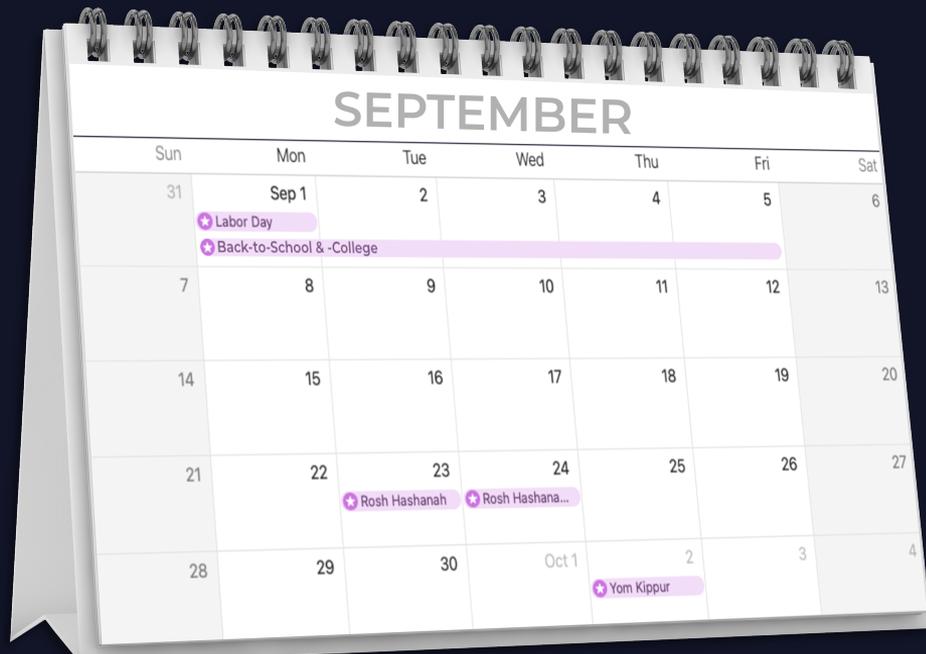
Organize, plan, and prepare to reach your goals

Review historical data, leverage automation, and make strategic optimizations before key selling days to ensure success.

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OCTOBER

Optimize your holiday strategy

OCTOBER

| Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28	29	30	Oct 1	2 ⭐ Yom Kippur	3	4
5	6	7 ⭐ TBC - Amazon October Deals Days	8	9	10	11
12	13 ⭐ Columbus Day ⭐ Indigenous Pe...	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 ⭐ Diwali	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31 ⭐ Halloween	Nov 1

Optimize your strategy with performance shifts and shopping behavior leading up to tentpole events

Review data from the past month and ensure your strategy still applies.

NOVEMBER

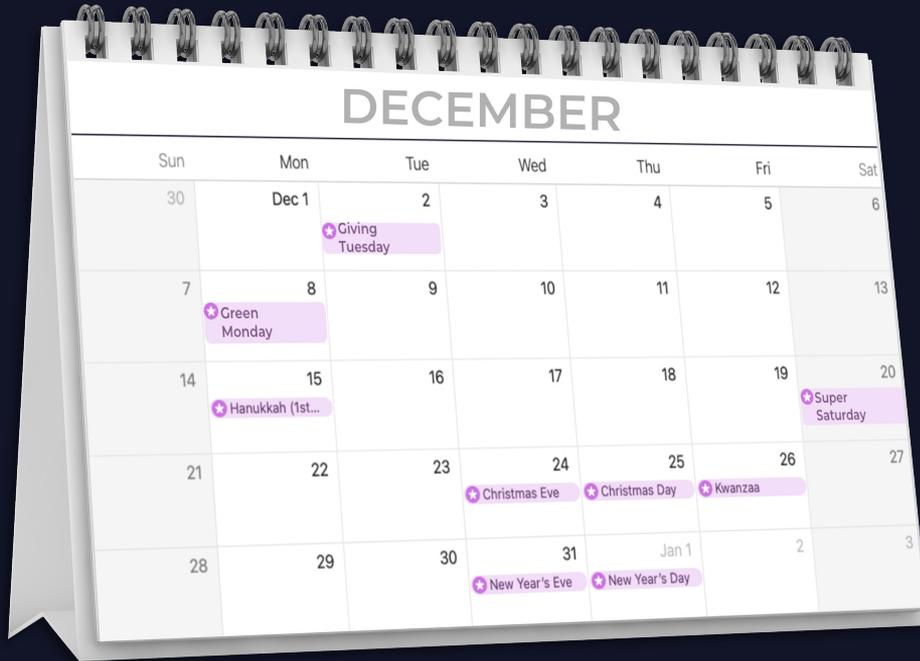## Stay on top of your holiday execution
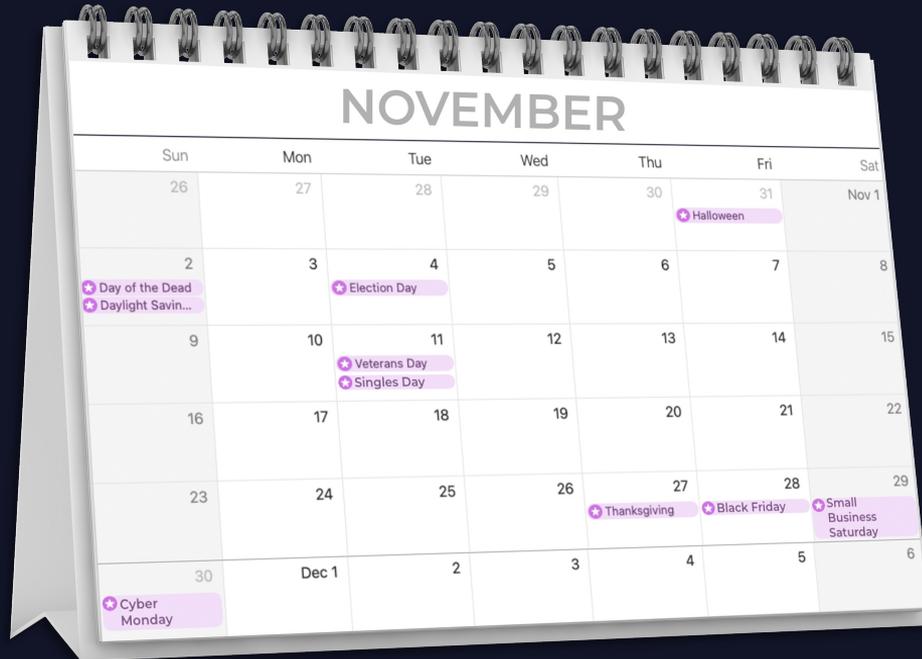
Turn Black Friday and Cyber Monday learnings into a 2025 closeout strategy
Analyze performance trends to uncover actionable insights for making impactful, data-driven optimizations.

DECEMBER

Continue driving holiday momentum

Turn Black Friday and Cyber Monday learnings into a 2025 closeout strategy

Keep the momentum after BFCM analyzing holiday insights and using tactics like remarketing to engage and convert undecided customers in the last shopping days of the year.

Strategic insights & impactful optimizations

RETAIL MEDIA

Leverage historical data for your holiday strategy

Turn past results into future wins

- Use **Competitive Insights** to measure how your brand is positioned on important keywords. As this data cannot be fetch retroactively, tag your keywords ASAP! More details here

- Use **time series analysis**, past **scheduled reports** and **dashboards**, to review performance insights from tentpole time periods to understand previous trends and replicate successes.

ASK CELESTE TO RUN AN AUDIT:

Build a plan to guide me on restructuring my campaigns to maximize targeting precision. Review all Amazon Sponsored Products campaigns and tell me which ones have more than 1 ASIN per ad group.

It might even reveal opportunities beyond structure, like budget allocation, ROI goals, and specific tactics!

"

Set Automated Alerts to *track competitive threats* by **monitoring drops in Paid and Organic Share of Aisle % on your "must win" keywords**. Set a WoW threshold of >20% drop for keywords starting above 75% Paid/Organic position. These high-value terms are already in leadership positions, so you want to catch any drops quickly.

Anita Walsh
VP Client Success: Holding Companies AMER   skai

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Streamline cross-channel media planning

Simplify forecasting and make smarter budget decisions

- Use **Skai Media Plans** to have a data-driven approach to allocating budgets, track planned v. actual spend, and make adjustments

- Take **media plans** to the next level by using graphs to project performance metrics using **media forecasting** to identify opportunities and risks

ASK CELESTE TO HELP WITH NEW BUDGET:

Tell me how to allocate a +30% incremental budget across retail media channels for campaigns with ROAS at least a $2 ROAS and constant 90-day performance during Black Friday. Provide budget distribution recommendations, scaling timeline, and expected performance impact.
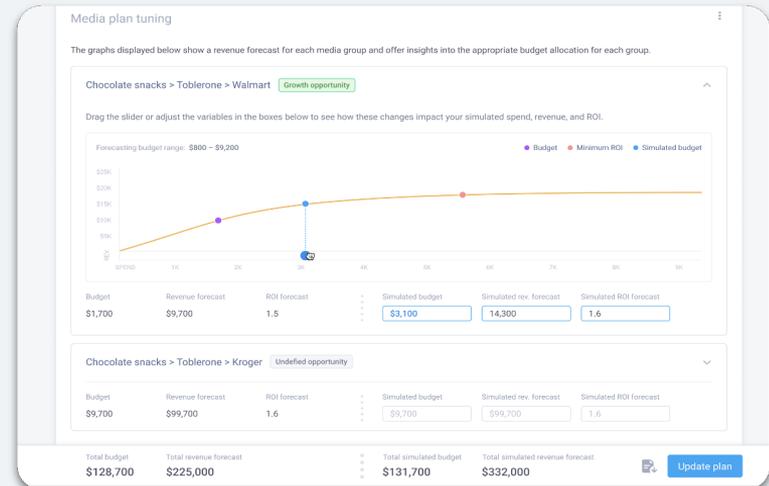
Harvest your strongest keyword strategy

Drive performance with smarter search strategies

- 4 weeks from the event, set up **automated keyword harvesting** to build up keyword lists with the high performing and trending search queries More details here

- 3 weeks from the event, review **search term analysis** to refine your precision by adding to your negative keywords list More details here

- 2 weeks out and the week of the event, run Skai portfolio health checks to review out-of-budget insights and ad spend trends. Identify how to optimize daily budgets without running out too early in the day More details here

ASK CELESTE TO PREP YOUR POST-MORTEM RECAP:

Can you help me identify opportunities for keyword optimizations and negative keywords going into Black Friday 2025?

Apply learnings across all your publishers!

> CPCs typically climb 30 days before major shopping events. Stay ahead of the surge and the competition! Gradually raise bids on priority keywords 1–2 weeks out to capture traffic and secure a competitive edge.

Ana Alicia Santaella
Sr Director, Product Marketing, Retail Media skai

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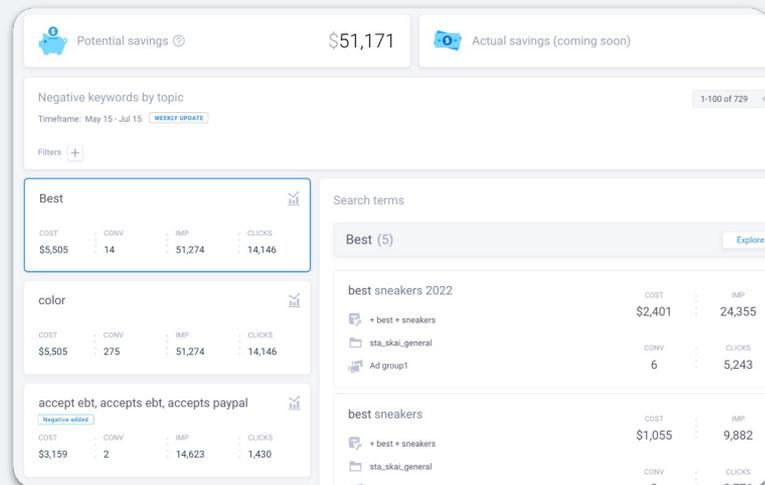
Strengthen audiences & creative

Activate display, TV, and video to drive deeper engagement

- Use **Amazon marketing cloud (AMC)** to analyze the customer journey and the impact of different ad types to build your full-funnel strategy More details here

- Use **audience manager** to learn what's already available for targeting and the estimated size More details here

- Build **AMC audiences** into custom DSP and Sponsored Ads audiences such as retargeting types More details here

- Use **Creative Center** to analyze asset performance and choose your best creative for peak shopping days More details here

Ready for Advanced AMC?
Ask your Skai rep about our XPN integration!

> Don't treat BFCM as a sprint: use AMC's expanded look back windows and custom audiences to balance performance with brand building. Activate DSP for awareness, Sponsored Display for remarketing, and invest in upper-funnel creative to carry momentum into 2025.

Nico Batista
Expert Services Global Lead, Retail Media
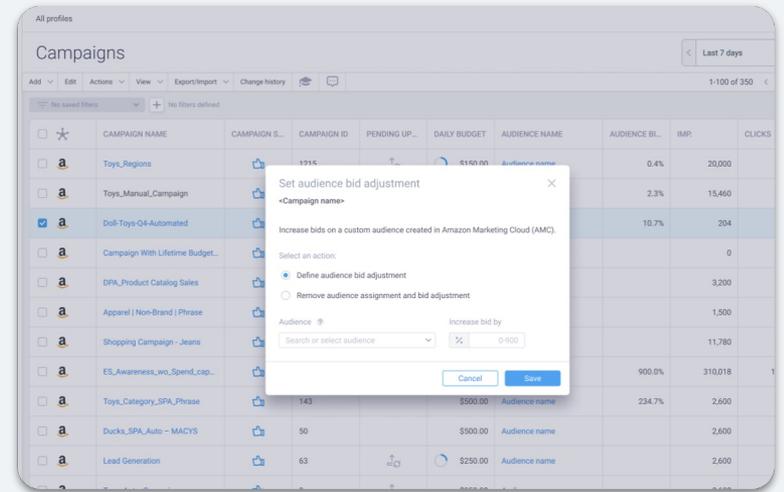
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Maximize daily bid & budget optimizations

Use the latest tools and feature updates to achieve more with less effort

- Pause Skai **portfolios** and abort **Budget Navigator** at least a day before major events (e.g. BFCM) to allow for flexible manual control. Adjust bids frequently during peak days to maintain visibility

- Use **multi-level** conditions within **advanced automated actions** to recreate optimization workflows and manage ad status by product-level data, ensuring inventory is prioritized for top-performing items during tentpole events

ASK CELESTE TO ANALYZE HISTORICAL RESULTS:

Review my Black Friday results from last year (Nov 29, 2024) and list which ad formats and campaigns drove the most revenue. What budget allocations between campaigns and ad types can we make to improve results this year?

Drill down deeper by asking follow up questions about ad types or campaign goals.

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Revert to pre-event bids & statuses with ease

Revert your bids and budgets to pre-event levels in bulk

- Before any tentpole date and peak periods, be sure to export **bulksheets** from Campaigns and/or Keywords Grid including the correct entity IDs, to capture current budgets and bids

- After the event period, import the **bulksheets** for a simple reset in a few clicks as opposed to spending hours resetting pacing

More details here
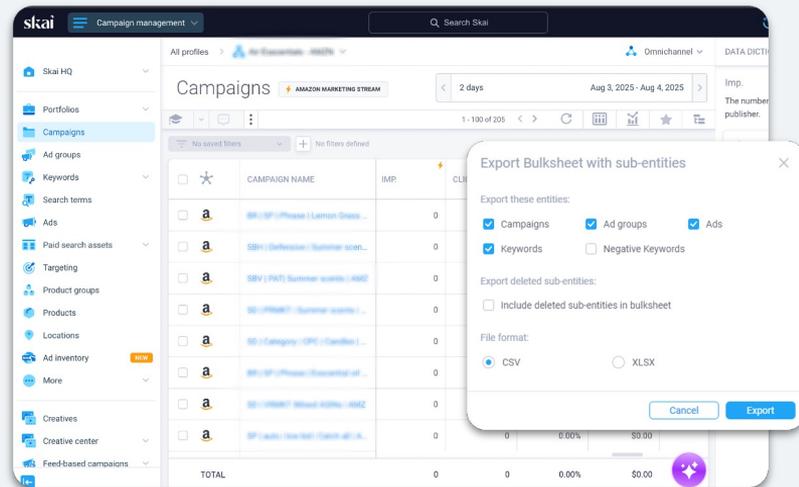
Prepare for future performance analysis

Organize your data to efficiently monitor, manage, and measure

- Label your holiday activity with **dimensions and categories**

- Tailor your **Skai HQ, spotlights** and **dashboard** with event-specific views filtering holiday campaigns | More details here >

- Create **pacing monitor** plans for a resource that will support tracking your paid ad spend

- Build **experiments** ahead of time to easily measure before, during, and after event days for valuable insights on what works best for your campaigns


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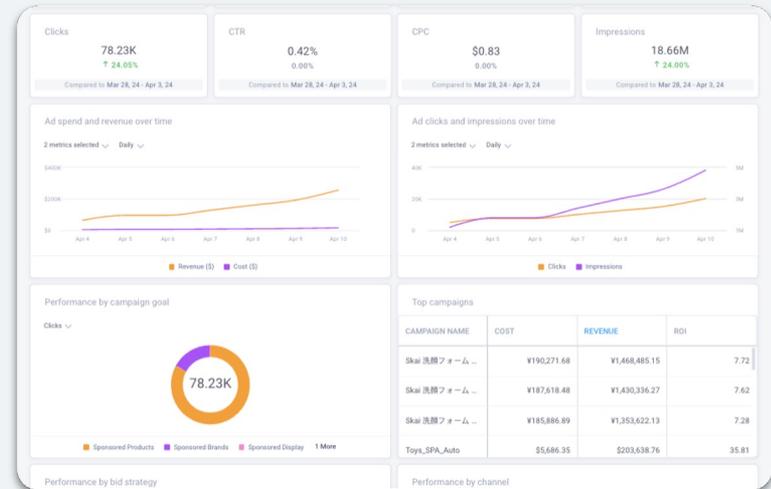
Stay nimble & ready to adjust

Automations to quickly pivot as needed

- Look for **automated actions** email notifications or alerts to stay on top of key metric changes

- Update scheduled report settings to automatically email performance updates, allowing you to monitor trend without logging into Skai

- Check **Skai HQ** to keep plans on track. Use Celeste to identify performance anomalies, and quickly audit holiday activity daily to make informed decisions.

- Stay on top of budget and revenue with **pacing monitor**

- Use **dayparting for events** to define dayparting settings for Amazon sponsored ads leveraging past performance and hourly insights
  More details here

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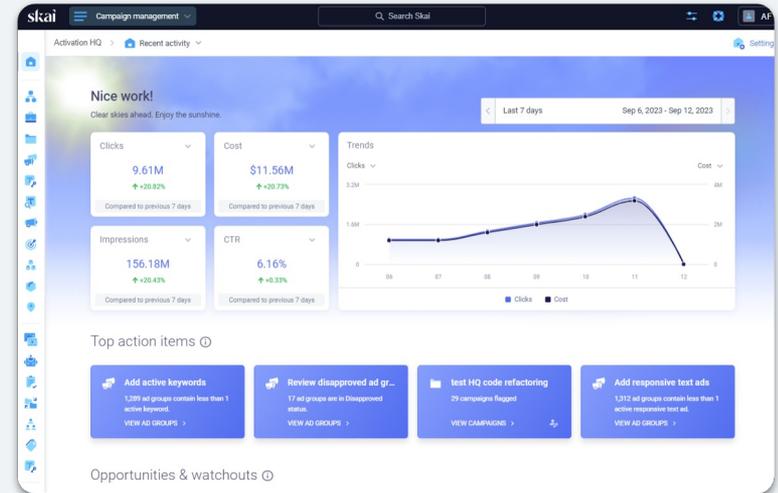
Optimize audiences & creative with precision

Routine checks to keep campaigns on track

- Check the **audience performance grid** regularly to spot when adjustments are needed. Reduce budgets on audiences with delivery issues (low impressions, clicks) and increase spend on those pacing well with efficient outcomes.

- For a more hands-off approach, set up **Automated Alerts** to catch performance shifts and trigger adjustments quickly.

- Review the **Creative Center** to manage assignments and scale creatives delivering stronger performance.

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Measure & report

Once all post-holiday conversions are captured, dig in to the final reporting

- Review **dashboards** to analyze trends, slice results, and capture event insights. Export as an **Instant Presentation** to share with stakeholders.

- Review **experiment** outcomes and apply winning campaign combinations to future strategies

- Set up **scheduled reports** to send data to FTP or cloud storage, integrating Skai data with other reporting for comprehensive Q4 insights.

ASK CELESTE TO PREP YOUR POST-MORTEM RECAP:

Can you turn this information into a presentation outline?

Maybe it will identify trends you hadn't yet thought of!

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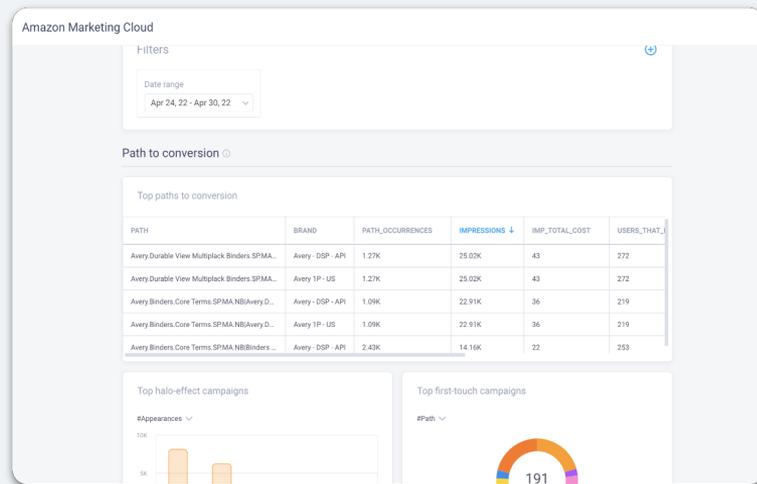
Maintain & recycle

Review results and apply learnings to next year

- Create **AMC audiences** from insights captured during peak shopping periods, then use those 'top converter' segments as a starting point in 2026

- Review keywords harvested to capture trending terms and add them into campaigns.

- Review **Creative Center** performance to identify top concepts and apply key messaging takeaways to 2026 strategy and asset development.

- Turn back on your Skai **portfolios** or **Budget Navigator** plans leading out of the events days

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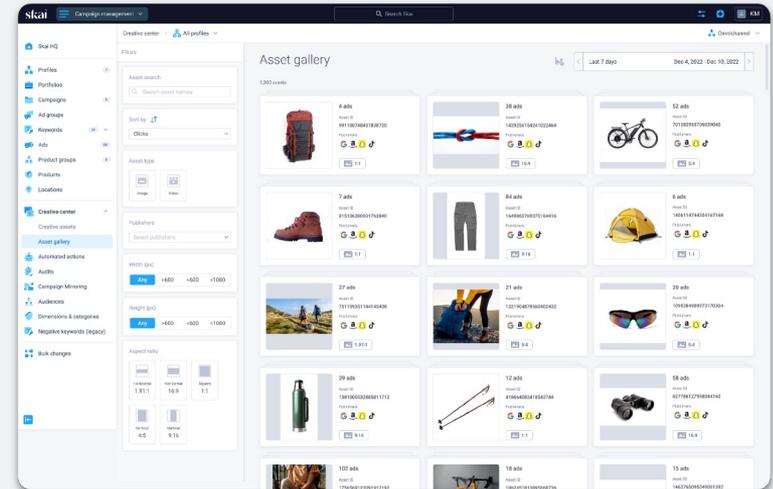
Event prep & measurement prompts

CELESTE AI

Use GenAI end-to-end

Work with Celeste to plan, activate & optimize

START

SCENARIO

Your company releases a new line of mascara, similar to your best sellers.

Black Friday is in one month and you're tasked with building up relevance and ad sales momentum before the holidays. You need to activate new ads ASAP.
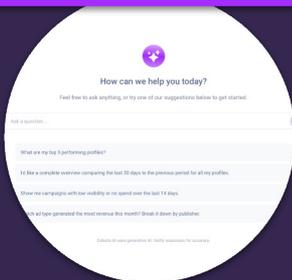
RESEARCH

Open the Campaigns grid to review historical performance, noting which campaigns met goals last year and which fell short.

NAVIGATE TO CELESTE

ASK CELESTE

For the 'mascara' dimension, analyze performance from the Campaigns grid from last Black Friday through Cyber Monday. Analyze performance from the Products grid for all products with "mascara" in the Title column. Create one summary for Campaigns and a second summary for Products.

ASK CELESTE

We're launching a new mascara line and I'm activating new campaigns for Black Friday and Cyber Monday this year. What strategic steps should I take based on what drove performance and where we had low sales last holiday season?

CELESTE PROVIDES

- Activation timeline
- Strategic pivots to make with campaigns
- Budget allocation strategy
- SKU bundling recommendation
- Suggested KPI targets
- Event day execution steps
- Expected media outcomes

ASK CELESTE

Follow up in the same chat to inquire about the recently activated campaigns, requesting updated steps to optimize based on current results.

ASK CELESTE

Follow up in the same chat to create a reporting summary to share with stakeholders along with key takeaways and strategic pivots that need to be made.

KEEP GOING!

Analyze performance with speed

Post-event insights powered by Celeste to uncover wins, losses and opportunities faster

Campaign Performance
- What are the top performing campaigns on [publisher] based on ad revenue for last week? Put the results in a succinct bullet list.

- Break down sales from my top 5 [publisher] campaigns this week by campaign type and ad group.

Product & Customer Insights
- Which ASINs drove the most sales on [publisher] this week? Can you provide details on how this has changed compared to last year?

- How many of my [publisher] ad sales this week were NTB? What was the percentage of new-to-brand purchases from [publisher] this week?

- How many repeat purchasers converted through [publisher] this week?

How can we help you today?

Feel free to ask anything, or try one of our suggestions below to get started.

Ask a question...

What are my top 5 performing profiles?

I'd like a complete overview comparing the last 30 days to the previous period for all my profiles.

Show me campaigns with low visibility or no spend over the last 14 days.

Which ad type generated the most revenue this month? Break it down by publisher.

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Analyze performance with speed

Continued

Performance Trends & Comparisons

- Show me the [publisher] revenue and ROAS trends for the past 30 days by campaign type. Can you put it into a table format, broken down by week so I can see how it's changed leading into this week, BFCM week?

- Compare this week's [publisher] CPCs to the previous week's and provide an analysis on what drove any changes in trends.

- Compare this week's total [publisher] sales from campaigns to the previous week. Can you put this into a quick reporting summary that I can share with the rest of the team?

- Can you analyze [publisher] trends week over week and provide a list of key insights into what those trends are, what caused them, and what we can do to further optimize this week based on these results?

- Can you give me a high-level summary of my [publisher] performance from this past week? What key highlights about [insert 2025 dates] would you recommend we dig into further?

> "
>
> Think of Celeste as your analyst. It's studied every campaign. **The more context you give, the better the insights you get** - KPIs, audience data, timelines, and more. Use Celeste to upskill your 2026 strategy and think differently about performance.
>
> **Melissa Barringer**
> **Product Marketing Director,**
> **Retail Media & GenAI**
>
> skaì

skaì

Digital shelf & retail insights to stay retail-ready

DIGITAL SHELF

Made in collaboration with **Profitero⁺**

Benchmark your competitive edge

Track share of voice and competitor availability to spot strengths and capture new opportunities

- Use **Shelf Intelligent Media (SIM)** competitor availability and pricing data to map your brand against competitors and identify market share opportunities More details here

- Measure **share of voice (SOV)** across priority keywords to set a benchmark to better identify where you're winning and where you're vulnerable

> "Brands winning the holidays balance prediction and agility. They use historical sales and share data to inform content & media strategy, and real-time sales to adjust assortment & budgets. An integrated content and media strategy is key to setting your brand up for success throughout the season.

Caroline Ballard
VP of Commerce Media Profitero⁺

skai | Profitero⁺

Pivot your media leveraging digital shelf signals

Stay agile with alerts and automated actions during peak shopping periods

- Use **SIM inventory signals** powered by Profitero to monitor your offline and online inventory in real time

- Use **Automated Actions** to set alerts for out-of-stock, lost buy box, and badge changes; automate bid adjustments when competitors drop out

- Track **SIM market share and Share of Search** to anticipate threats and invest where potential is highest

- Set **Automated Actions** with **SIM competitive signals** to boost bids and budgets when competitors are out of stock, then revert when they return

My Availability Score & Competitor Availability Score Scale

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Relative Price Score Scale

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Win Rate Scale

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

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Optimize for visibility and profitability

Push high-return opportunities while protecting margins

- Use **badge wins** and **Ratings & Reviews** shifts as triggers for adjustments to move products from page 2 to page 1 *More details here*

- Monitor 3P sellers to maintain brand integrity, shifting promoted SKUs if unplanned changes occur

- Redirect promotions and budgets to in-stock, high-margin products to avoid wasted spend *More details here*

- Leverage **competitive keyword insights from SIM and Competitive Insights**, and **buy box data from SIM** to find your highest-return opportunities *More details here*
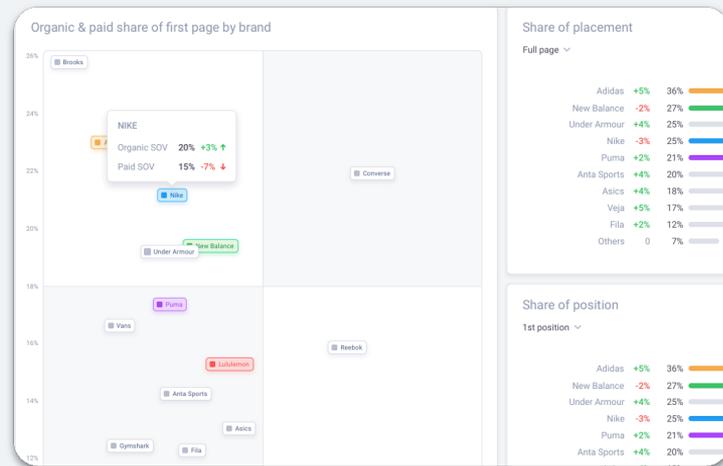
Learn the "connected commerce" difference

Turn this season's lessons into next year's wins

- Review **Competitive Insights and SOV** trends to inform next year's digital shelf strategy

- Use **time series** to analyze performance deltas across date ranges, double down on activations that deliver results, and build automations with granular accuracy

ASK CELESTE TO HELP:

Can you show the performance difference between campaigns labeled 'SIM' and those without?

Be sure you set up your labeling!

skai   Profitero⁺
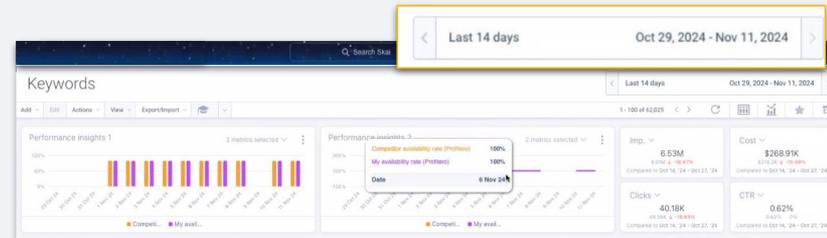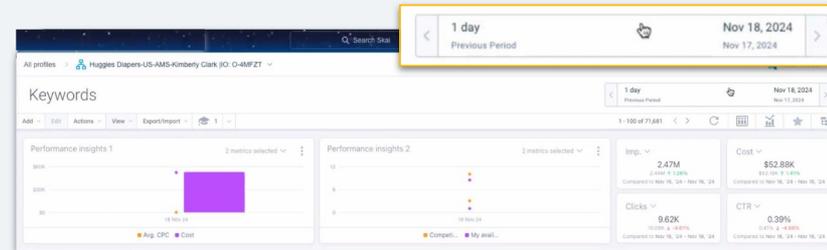
Content that converts

CONTENT OPTIMIZATION

Made in collaboration with DetailPage

Build a strong PDP and creative foundation

Prepare pages, keywords, and seasonal creative to launch with maximum visibility

- Add complete specs, images, videos, and support details to PDPs to maximize conversion

- Have AI search-ready content live by early October to allow 6 weeks for indexing and Answer Engine Optimization (AEO)

- Review prior holiday and current trending seasonal keyword data

- Integrate priority keywords from evergreen and trending terms into PDPs titles, bullets, alt text, and backend fields

- Develop seasonal imagery and copy for ads, brand store, and social that align with holiday campaigns and reflect top-shopper-search-keywords

- Refine PDP titles, bullets, and images based on early campaign learnings

ASK CELESTE:

Show top 15 non-branded keywords that don't include "[brand name]" by YTD revenue. Create a 90-day SEO content roadmap for product detail pages that includes: revenue-prioritized page titles, a competitor differentiation strategy, and ideas for buyer and technical guides. Structure as a checklist broken out into an implementation timeline.

Analyze and optimize content from one central hub

Refine PDPs, test creative, and keep content consistent to drive conversion

- Ensure PDP titles, bullets, and images are optimized, live, and continuously refined by replacing low-performing ASINs

- Test holiday creative variations and use **Creative Center** to identify top performers for peak weeks | More details here >

- Update PDPs and creatives with gift-focused imagery, clear shipping cut-off dates, and urgency messaging

- Keep all channels aligned with the same content updates to avoid mismatches and shopper confusion

- Measure performance throughout the season and re-optimize with evergreen and next season's trending keywords once the holidays wrap

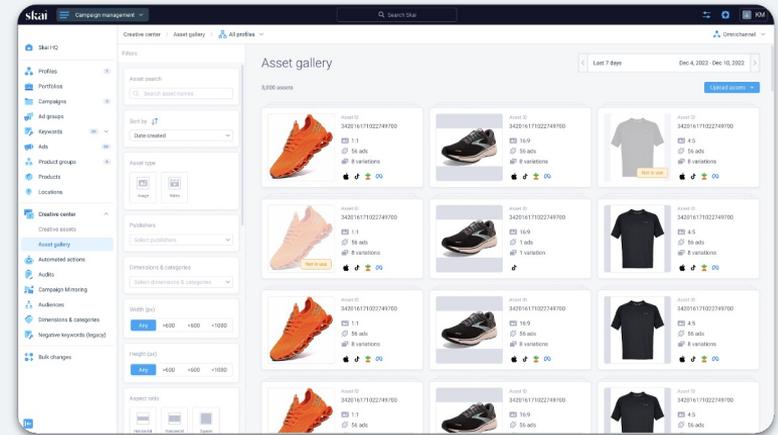> "AI has changed the product discovery game on Amazon, ChatGPT, Walmart - anywhere shoppers are searching and discovering products. **Optimizing for AEO pre-holiday is the smart play for outsized gains.**"

Aimee Pierce
VP Business Development DetailPage

skai | DetailPage

Ticketing automation & revenue recovery

RETAIL OPERATIONS

Made in collaboration with **CARBON 6**

Product & Inventory Planning

Plan ahead to prioritize products, forecast demand, and keep inventory stocked to capture every sale

- Identify priority products to push, such as best sellers, overstock clearance, or new launches

- Conduct root-cause analysis to identify recurring deduction types (packaging compliance, routing errors, late shipments) to prevent an influx of repeat charges in November

- Ensure sufficient weeks of cover on top SKUs and promotional items

- Get your inventory ready by making sure fulfillment centers and retail partners are stocked with the right amount of inventory to avoid lost sales

- Demand your forecast directly in Amazon, using Brand Analytics, use SP-API signals in Skai, or even use Celeste

ASK CELESTE TO HELP WITH PRODUCT STRATEGY LEVERAGING SKAI'S CONNECTION TO AMAZON'S SP-API:

Review product and keyword level results from the past 60 days. Analyze the relationship between product availability, keyword digital shelf performance, and ad spend efficiency for my top SKUs across retail media platforms.

Tune into Carbon6's webinar to learn more about vendor negotiations

skai ❀ CARBON 6

Vendor & Pricing Strategy

Use data and pricing insights to strengthen vendor negotiations, protect margins, and stay competitive across channels

- Prepare for annual vendor negotiations to protect your margins by using data, recovery solutions, and developing a negotiation strategy

- Confirm you pricing strategy, aligning prices across all retailers to avoid losing sales to lower-priced channels

- Keep an eye out on competitor pricing with **SIM Relative Price Score**

" On average, what we typically will see is that less than 20% of deductions are ever actually (being) disputed when we talk to our suppliers. To avoid these deductions and keep a smooth relationship with Walmart, suppliers should focus on being compliant in these three main areas: Packing, Labeling, and Shipping.

Vanessa Cox
Strategic GTM Lead for Walmart CARBON 6

skai CARBON 6

Safeguard margins with proactive operations

Anticipate risks, document everything, and stay ahead of costly chargebacks and deductions

- Prepare for POs to avoid PO Fill Rate chargebacks

- Share planned warehouse closure dates with retail partners to avoid late shipment penalties, PO cancellations, or stockouts

- Share last-ship dates with your team. Promote free or expedited shipping offers to capture late shoppers and convert undecided customers

- Save carrier and warehouse documentation from every shipment to stay proactive when retailers claim "goods not received"

- Track inventory daily and execute backup plans for low-stock and overstock scenarios through the end of the season

- Reconcile unpaid invoices before year-end to boost cash flow and strengthen your 2026 negotiation position

✓ PREPARE POS

✓ PREPARE FOR WAREHOUSE CLOSURES

✓ SHARE LAST-SHIP DATES

✓ AVOID CHARGEBACKS

✓ AVOID STOCKOUTS

✓ ORGANIZE DOCUMENTATION

✓ RECOVER REVENUE

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THANK YOU

We hope you found the Commerce Media Holiday Playbook useful.

For any follow-up questions,
please reach out to your Skai rep.