



Black Friday Checklist:

# **63 checks to prepare for Black Friday Cyber Monday 2024**



# Your Black Friday Cyber Monday checklist for e-commerce success is here!

The holiday shopping season is upon us, and for e-commerce businesses, Black Friday and Cyber Monday (BFCM) represent an unparalleled opportunity to drive sales, attract new customers, and strengthen brand loyalty.



**Black Friday 2023 online sales reached a record \$9.8 billion, up 7.5% from 2022.**

If done right, you can achieve holiday season sales volumes that could be at par with sales for the entire year.

However, the intense competition and surge in online traffic can make these events both exhilarating and challenging.

To ensure that your business is fully prepared to capitalize on BFCM, we've created this comprehensive checklist. The purpose of this checklist is to help you navigate every critical aspect of your Black Friday and Cyber Monday preparations, from optimizing your website and planning effective marketing campaigns to ensuring smooth logistics and providing exceptional customer service.

In this checklist, you'll find actionable checks segmented into six key areas:

1. Website Readiness
2. Marketing Campaign Preparation
3. Customer Experience
4. Logistics and Fulfillment
5. Analytics and Monitoring
6. Contingency Planning

Whether you're a seasoned e-commerce veteran or new to the holiday sales rush, this checklist will serve as your go-to resource for ensuring a successful and profitable BFCM season.

Let's dive in and get your business ready to shine during the biggest shopping event of the year!

# Website Readiness

Your website is the cornerstone of your online business, especially during Black Friday when traffic surges. A well-prepared website can handle the increased load, offer a seamless user experience, and convert visitors into customers.

Ensuring that your site is optimized for speed, mobile devices, and security is crucial to reducing bounce rates and abandoned carts, thereby boosting sales.

Make sure all the below-mentioned items are ticked off to get your website ready for the holiday season sales:

- Ensure fast loading times:** A slow website can increase cart abandonment. Test website speed and optimize for fast loading to prevent high bounce rates. The best tools you can try are: Google Page Insights, Pingdom, GTmetrix, etc.
- Mobile optimization:** Confirm that your website is fully responsive and mobile-friendly.
- Checkout process:** Test the checkout process to ensure it's smooth, quick, and error-free.
- Inventory management:** Double-check inventory levels and update stock availability in real-time.
- Security measures:** Ensure that your website is secure, with up-to-date SSL certificates and fraud prevention tools.
- Disaster recover:** Implement a reliable disaster recovery for your website and also any other application you could be using for data capture in case of a crash. The easiest way to start is by backing up data regularly and setting up a system to quickly restore the website in case of a crash.

## ☆ Bonus tip

Before BFCM, simulate heavy traffic on your website to ensure that it can handle the increased load without crashing. This proactive approach will help you identify and fix any potential issues before the big day.

# Marketing Campaign Preparation

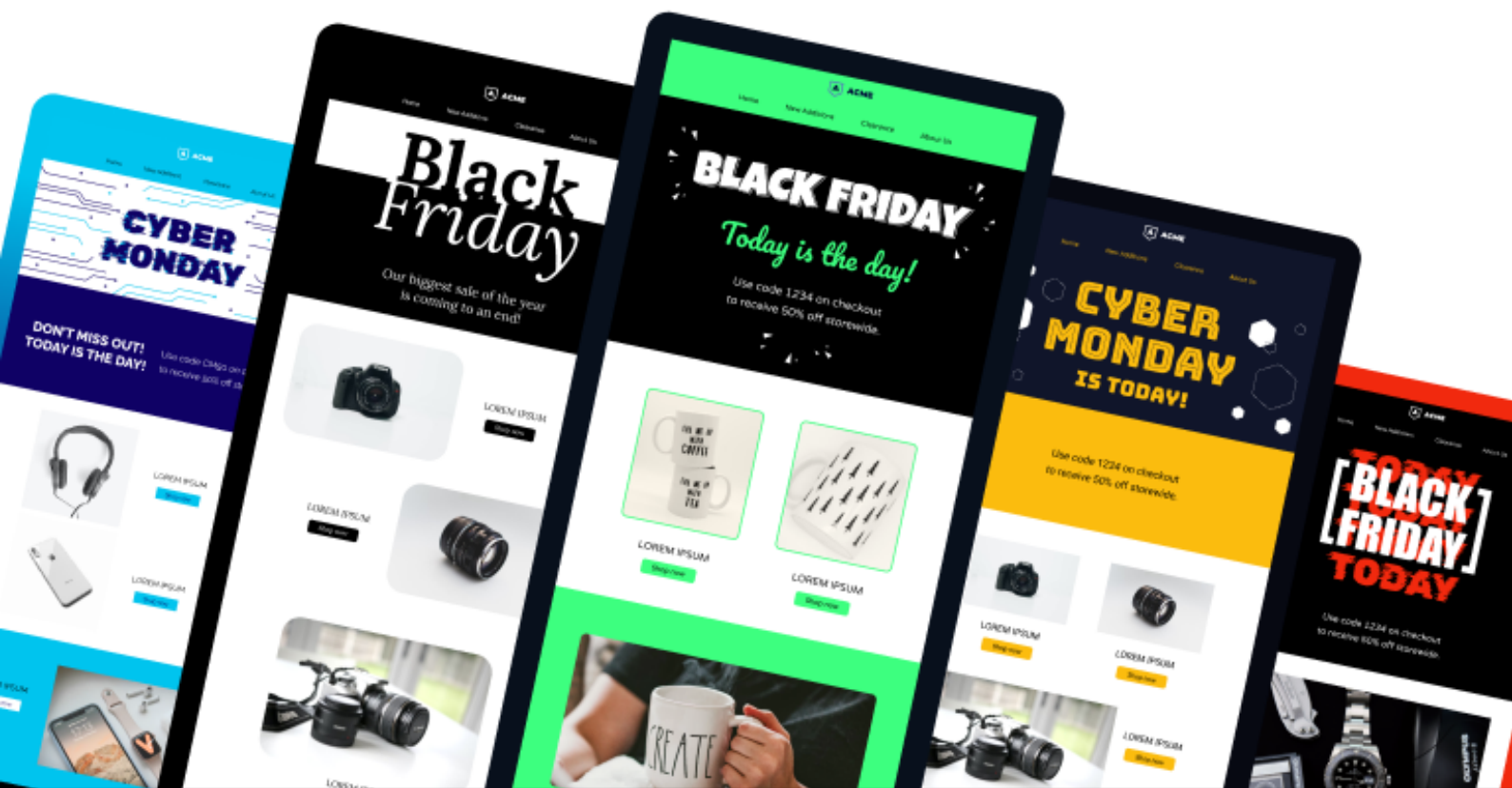
A well-executed marketing campaign drives traffic to your e-commerce store and keeps your brand top-of-mind for customers during the hyper-competitive holiday season. Crafting and scheduling campaigns in advance ensures that your message reaches the right audience at the right time.

Effective email campaigns, social media promotions, and paid advertising will significantly contribute to your sales by creating urgency and enticing shoppers with irresistible deals.

Since marketing is going to make or break your Black Friday sales, you need to pay attention to the finer details for each marketing channel.

You have to pay special attention to

- Black Friday-specific promotions
- Email marketing
- Social media marketing
- Pay-per-click advertising
- Search Engine Optimization



## Black Friday-specific promotions

Crafting irresistible promotions is key to standing out during the Black Friday rush. Strategically using promo codes, deep discounts, and limited-time offers can drive urgency and significantly boost conversions.

- Promo codes:** Create unique Black Friday coupon codes and ensure they are prominently featured in your marketing materials.
- Deep discounts:** Offer deep discounts on popular products to draw in customers and encourage bulk purchases.
- Coupons:** Distribute coupon codes via email, social media, or through partnerships, valid only during the Black Friday weekend.
- Limited-time offers:** Implement flash sales or hourly deals to create urgency and prompt immediate purchases during the Black Friday period.
- Bundling:** Offer product bundles at a discounted rate to increase average order value and move more inventory.
- Buy one, get one (BOGO) deals:** Encourage larger purchases with BOGO offers on select items, appealing to bargain hunters.

### ☆ Bonus tip

- Incorporate countdown timers in your emails and landing pages to create urgency and drive conversions.
- Keep an eye on your competitors' marketing efforts. This can provide insights into trends and help you adjust your strategy to stay competitive.



## Email Marketing

Email marketing remains one of the most effective channels for driving conversions during Black Friday.

A well-planned email marketing strategy can engage your audience, create anticipation, and drive traffic to your site at crucial moments.

Checklist to follow to ace your email marketing:

- Campaign planning:** Outline the entire email campaign flow, including teasers, launch emails, reminders, and last-chance offers.
- Segmentation:** Segment your email list based on customer behavior, purchase history, and engagement levels to tailor your messages.
- Personalization:** Personalize emails with recipient names, personalized product recommendations, and dynamic email content.
- Subject lines:** Craft compelling [Black Friday email subject lines](#) that create urgency and curiosity (e.g., "Don't Miss Our Biggest Black Friday Deals!").
- A/B testing:** Test different versions of subject lines, CTAs, and email content to determine what resonates best with your audience.
- Scheduling:** Schedule emails for optimal send times based on your audience's engagement data.
- Deliverability:** Check email deliverability by testing for spam triggers and ensuring your emails are mobile-optimized.
- Automated flows:** Set up automated email flows, including abandoned cart reminders and post-purchase thank you emails.
- Building email list:** Collect email addresses from new customers who interacted through Black Friday deals or offers. They can be retargeted for upcoming offers and seasonal sales.

### ☆ Bonus tip

- Take inspiration from top [Black Friday email examples](#) to improve your open rates, conversions, and sales.
- Use a dedicated fail-proof [email marketing software](#) that can ease your work and manage scale simultaneously.

## Social Media Marketing

Social media platforms are ideal for generating buzz, engaging with your audience, and amplifying your Black Friday offers.

By leveraging social media effectively, you can reach a broader audience and drive more traffic to your website.

Checklist to follow to ace your email marketing:

- Content calendar:** Create and schedule a content calendar that includes posts, stories, and live sessions leading up to and during Black Friday.
- Platform-specific content:** Tailor your content to each platform (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) based on their audience interests and behavior.
- Hashtags:** Research and include relevant Black Friday and industry-specific hashtags to increase visibility. It also helps to create a buzz with custom hashtags relevant to your business or brand.
- Interaction:** Plan for active interaction and engagement by responding to comments, messages, and mentions quickly.
- User-generated content:** Encourage customers to share their purchases and experiences using a branded hashtag, and repost this content to your channels.
- Social media ads:** Set up and test paid social media campaigns, ensuring they are targeted to the right audience segments.
- Influencer partnerships:** Collaborate with influencers or brand ambassadors to extend your reach and create authentic content.

☆ Bonus tip

Showcase user-generated content and reviews to build credibility and encourage others to engage with your brand. Sharing positive customer experiences can drive more interest and conversions.

## Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising to maximize sales quickly

PPC advertising is essential for capturing high-intent shoppers searching for Black Friday deals. They are also bound to give quick results as they are ranked above organic results.

A well-optimized PPC campaign can drive significant traffic to your site and result in increased conversions.

Follow these checks to maximize your PPC campaign performance.

- Keyword research:** Conduct thorough keyword research to identify high-performing Black Friday-related keywords and long-tail variations.
- Ad copy:** Write compelling ad copy that highlights your unique selling propositions, Black Friday discounts, and limited-time offers.
- Landing pages:** Ensure that your PPC ads direct users to relevant, optimized landing pages that match the ad's intent.
- Budget allocation:** Allocate your budget strategically across different Black Friday promotions, with a focus on high-performing keywords and demographics.
- Bidding strategy:** Adjust your bidding strategy to compete effectively during the high-traffic period, including the use of automated bidding tools.
- Retargeting campaigns:** Set up retargeting campaigns to reach users who have previously visited your site but haven't made a purchase.
- Performance monitoring:** Continuously monitor your campaigns, adjusting bids, ad copy, and targeting based on performance metrics.

### ☆ Bonus tip

Monitor and adjust your bids in real-time to stay competitive, especially for high-intent keywords around Black Friday and the holiday season. Consider increasing your bids for top-performing keywords to ensure your ads are visible.



## Search Engine Optimization (SEO) bespoke to online shopping

SEO plays a critical role in ensuring your website ranks high in search engine results for Black Friday-related queries.

Effective SEO practices can drive organic traffic to your site, leading to increased sales without the need for paid advertising.

- Plan ahead:** You need to optimize your content for SEO friendliness as early as you can so that you can secure rankings well before the weeks leading to Black Friday.
- Keyword optimization:** Identify and optimize your website content for Black Friday and holiday-related keywords.
- Meta tags:** Update meta titles and descriptions to include Black Friday keywords and compelling CTAs.
- Content updates:** Refresh existing content with relevant keywords, updated information, and optimized headings to improve search rankings.
- Internal linking:** Ensure that Black Friday landing pages are well-linked internally to boost their SEO value.
- Image optimization:** Optimize images by compressing files, adding alt text with relevant keywords, and ensuring they load quickly.
- Mobile SEO:** Confirm that your website's mobile version is fully optimized, as mobile traffic is likely to increase during Black Friday.
- Technical SEO:** Conduct a technical SEO audit to check for and fix issues like broken links, slow page speeds, or crawl errors.
- Local SEO:** If applicable, optimize your Google My Business listing and ensure your local SEO is strong to capture local searches.

☆ Bonus tip

If applicable, update your local SEO efforts to capture search traffic from users looking for Black Friday deals in specific locations.

## Customer Experience, a crucial factor that can influence Black Friday sales

Exceptional customer experience is key to building trust and loyalty, which are especially important during high-stakes shopping events like Black Friday.

By providing excellent support, clear policies, and personalized interactions, you can enhance customer satisfaction, reduce cart abandonment, and encourage repeat purchases, all of which contribute to higher sales.

- Customer support:** Ensure that customer service channels (live chat, email, phone) are fully staffed and prepared for increased inquiries.
- Return and refund policies:** Clearly display return and refund policies on your website to build trust and reduce post-purchase friction.
- User reviews:** Encourage and showcase user reviews and testimonials to boost credibility and conversions.
- Personalization:** Use customer data to personalize marketing messages, product recommendations, and offers.
- Reward loyal customers:** Offer exclusive early access to Black Friday deals or additional discounts to loyal customers as a way to strengthen customer loyalty and encourage repeat purchases.

### ☆ Bonus tip

Deploy chatbots to handle common customer queries and issues. This can help reduce the burden on your customer support team and provide immediate assistance to customers.

## Logistics and Fulfillment specific for Black Friday deals

Efficient logistics and fulfillment are vital to meeting customer expectations, particularly during Black Friday when order volumes spike and delivery channels often get clogged.

By preparing for smooth logistic operations in shipping, order tracking, and packaging, you can avoid delays and mishaps, thereby increasing customer satisfaction and the likelihood of future purchases.

In fact, effective logistics also minimize costly errors and returns. Follow these checks to keep your logistic operations running smoothly during the holiday season:

- Black Friday-specific fulfillment:** Prioritize and streamline the fulfillment process for orders tied to Black Friday deals to meet delivery expectations and to avoid shipping delays.
- Deal-specific packaging:** Clearly label and package Black Friday deal orders separately to avoid any mix-ups during fulfillment and delivery.
- Shipping options:** Offer various shipping options, including expedited shipping, and clearly communicate deadlines for delivery before Christmas. Free shipping is one of the draws during the holiday season.
- Order tracking:** Ensure customers can easily track their orders with automated tracking updates.
- Packaging:** Prepare for high order volumes by stocking up on packaging materials and ensuring they are branded and secure.
- Supply chain management:** Coordinate with suppliers to ensure timely restocking and avoid supply chain disruptions.

### ☆ Bonus tip

To speed up the fulfillment process, consider pre-packaging your best-selling items. This can reduce handling time and ensure faster delivery.

## Analytics and Monitoring to decipher holiday shopping season trends

Analytics and monitoring are essential for making data-driven decisions and optimizing your marketing strategies in real-time.

By keeping a close eye on traffic, conversions, and customer feedback, you can quickly identify what's working and what's not, allowing you to make adjustments that can significantly boost your sales during Black Friday.

- Traffic monitoring:** Set up real-time monitoring of website traffic and performance to quickly address any issues. Tools like GA-4, GSC, etc. help with that.
- Conversion tracking:** Ensure that all conversion tracking (Google Analytics, Facebook Pixel, etc.) is set up and functioning correctly.
- Cart abandonment:** As much as conversion tracking and sales is important, it is necessary to keep an eye on the causes of cart abandonment and resolve them at the earliest.
- Sales analytics:** Review sales data daily to identify trends and adjust marketing strategies if necessary.
- Customer feedback:** Monitor customer feedback and reviews closely to identify and resolve any issues promptly.

### ☆ Bonus tip

Configure alerts for key performance indicators (KPIs) like website downtime, cart abandonment rates, and ad spend to quickly respond to any anomalies during BFCM.

## Contingency Planning, to keep things running under all circumstances

Even with thorough preparation, things can go wavy during Black Friday. Having contingency plans in place ensures that you can quickly address unexpected issues, from technical glitches to PR crises.

This readiness can prevent revenue loss and protect your brand's reputation, ensuring that your sales remain strong even in the face of challenges.

- Plan B for technical issues:** Have a contingency plan in place for technical issues, including server overloads or payment gateway failures.
- Alternative communication channels:** Prepare alternative communication channels, such as SMS or push notifications, in case email systems go down.
- Crisis management:** Establish a crisis management plan for handling potential PR issues, like delayed shipments or negative reviews.

### ☆ Bonus tip

Conduct scenario planning exercises with your team to prepare for worst-case situations. This helps in ensuring that everyone knows their role and can act swiftly if something goes wrong.

# Wrapping Up Your Black Friday and Cyber Monday Success

As you prepare for the biggest shopping event of the year, it's clear that success during Black Friday and Cyber Monday (BFCM) hinges on thorough planning, strategic execution, and attention to detail. This checklist has provided you with a comprehensive guide to ensure that every aspect of your e-commerce business is optimized and ready to meet the demands of the holiday shopping season.

By following the steps outlined in each section—from website readiness and marketing campaigns to logistics and customer experience—you're positioning your business to not only meet but exceed customer expectations. Remember, BFCM is not just about driving immediate sales; it's an opportunity to build lasting relationships with your customers and set the stage for continued growth throughout the year.

To further streamline your efforts, consider leveraging tools like SmartrMail to enhance your email marketing strategy, ensuring that your messages resonate with your audience and drive conversions during this crucial period.

The screenshot displays the SmartrMail email editor interface. On the left, the 'Newsletter settings' panel is visible, containing fields for Name, To, Exclude, Subject, Preview, and Template. The main editor area shows a preview of the email content, which includes a header with the ACME logo and navigation links, a large 'Black Friday Sneak peak' banner with a 50% off promotion, and two product images at the bottom.

Back to Newsletters

Black Friday sneak peak

AutoSaving... Save and exit Schedule and send

Preview Send a test Sort blocks

Newsletter settings

Name  
Black Friday sneak peak

To  
All subscribers (1101)

Exclude (optional)  
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Subject  
Time to Re Order Last Product Purchased

Preview (optional)  
Optional email preview snippet text

Template  
Main Template

Product

Image

Body

Button

ACME

Home New Arrivals Clearance About Us

Black Friday Sneak peak

Use code 1234 on checkout to receive 50% off storewide.

# How SmarterMail Can Power Your Black Friday Campaigns

Using an efficient and user-friendly email marketing software like SmarterMail can significantly streamline your Black Friday email marketing efforts.

SmarterMail's features, such as easy segmentation, automation, and personalization, allow you to quickly set up targeted campaigns, manage high email volumes, and ensure that your emails reach the right audience at the right time.

Also, SmarterMail offers a range of email marketing capabilities, like:

- Drag-and-drop automated flow builder
- A repository of Black Friday emails and newsletter templates
- Automated abandoned cart recovery emails
- Simplified SMS marketing

## Get started for free.

SmarterMail integrates well with most e-commerce platforms.



[Book a demo](#)

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