

Your last-minute Pre-Black Friday Checklist 2023

Have you made a list (and checked it twice)?

Most retailers start building their marketing strategy for BFCM before summer is out. So as strategies are being shared, implemented, and optimised - we've pulled together a list of what we think are some key preparations and activities that can support a strong Black Friday/ Cyber Monday marketing strategy. You'll also find a guide on avoiding deliverability disasters, and after the checklist, there is a comprehensive list of key dates (official and unofficial) that can be leveraged in campaigns and touchpoints through the festive season.

Last-minute pre-holiday checklist

Have you?

- Created or updated marketing calendar with ALL activities
- Created your deliverability and send plan (want to avoid deliverability dramas? [Check out our guide here](#))
- Reviewed your data and done basic list hygiene
- Highlighted key dates (e.g. Black Friday, Green Tuesday, Shipping cutoffs) - no? We have a list of key dates below you can use.
- ‘Holidized’ your site and content Updated email headers and footers on ALL emails (BAU, triggers, transactional)

Official and unofficial dates for the festive diary

Of course, every date on this list won't necessarily be relevant for your brand (if you don't sell socks, you're probably not celebrating 'National Sock Day'). You'll also find some suggested ideas, such as when is best to collect preference data ahead of the holidays or when to send out gift guides. We've also included some examples we love below.

- Optimized emails and site for mobile - shopping behavior is increasingly becoming mobile-first, particularly during the holiday season
- Reviewed your program and make sure key triggers are in place
- Put in code or creative requests before code freezes and deadlines
- Defined holiday segments (e.g. Last year's holiday shoppers, VIP's)
- Updated frequency caps
- Checked your social syncs and update segments as needed.
- Reviewed and updated SEO terms
- Wrapped up any A/B testing (as results will be skewed with increased traffic)
- Tested any and all integrations
- Stress tested your website to ensure it can handle increased visits
- Communicated holiday-specific return policy (if any)

01

9.23

First day of fall/ autumn

02

10.9

Canadian Thanksgiving

03

10.19

Get to know your customers/
collect UGC content

04

10.28

Make Difference Day (US)

05

11.12

Diwali

06

10.31

Halloween

07

11.03

Recommended day to send gift
guides

08

11.05

Bonfire Day aka Guy Fawkes (UK)

09

11.11

Veterans Day (US)/ Singles Day
(APAC)

10

11.23

Thanksgiving

11

11.24

Black Friday

12

11.25

Small Business Saturday

13

11.27

Cyber Monday

14

11.28

Giving Tuesday

15

12.04

National Sock Day

16

12.11

Green Monday

17

12.14

Free Shipping Day

18

12.24

Christmas eve

11

12.25

Christmas Day

12

12.26

Boxing Day (UK) | Kwanzaa

13

12.31

New Years Eve

14

01.01

New Years Day

Some final tips

01

Discount alternatives can work

Yes, BFCM is a discounting event but, beyond the sale itself, there are other ways to attract shoppers and drive value or encourage behaviour, like early purchase. For example, free shipping is still one of the biggest converters, and tailored offers through loyalty programs, or points for purchase can also garner engagement and conversion. In 2021, Sweaty Betty rewarded members of their loyalty scheme by offering early access to their Black Friday sale.

02

Clarity and visibility are key

Make it clear, make it easy. Use countdown timers, auto apply codes, share your holiday calendars (like Nike's from last year), and include shipping cut-offs and return policies . whenever relevant.

Some final tips

03

Incentivize high-value activities

If you want to drive app sign-ups or SMS opt-ins, incentivize these actions during the holiday period and strategize after peak season around ways to increase long-term value and retention for acquired contacts on these channels.

04

Use data to reduce social costs

Acquisition costs are soaring. You can reduce your CPA by using your data to drive social targeting, like Dollar Shave Club below.

Some final tips

05

Inventory and Supply Chain challenges

Like last year, many brands will be impacted by higher delivery costs and longer delivery timelines. Many retailers sent out communications ahead of Black Friday to set expectations around ongoing supply or shipping challenges. This can be a good way to encourage early purchase as well as build trust by being transparent about any issues.

It's crucial that you clearly communicate that to customers now. Being transparent about this helps foster trust with current and potential customers, and can get you ahead of possible customer service inquiries.

Make sure you include shipping cutoff or even update your post purchase campaigns to include a link to tracking. We've included three varied examples we liked below.



Want more Black Friday best practice and advice?

Why not check out our definitely not dramatically-titled Black Friday Survival Guide.

Interested in learning more about how to engage and retain new contacts throughout the duration of the festive season and beyond? Head over to our Post-Black Friday checklist for retention tips and tricks to keep those fairweather holiday shoppers interested. Or check out [our blog](#) and [content hub](#), for campaigns we loved, retail expert advice, and more this holiday season.