

Forget winter, Black Friday is coming...

Issued by [TDMC](#)

1 Oct 2022

Get your business BFCM ready! Black Friday and Cyber Monday are relatively new concepts in the South African market. That being said, 87% (almost 9 out of 10) consumers in South Africa know what Black Friday is. There are some mind-blowing stats that have come out of Black Friday and Cyber Monday in South Africa.

Sales are up a whopping 2 571% on Black Friday, compared to any other day in the year in South Africa.



Out of the South African shopping consumer base, 15.5% will only look at online channels for deals, whereas 64% will look at omni-channel chains (Online and Brick & Mortar stores).

An average of R1 654.00 is spent by a South African consumer on Black Friday, with a specific focus on clothing, shoes and electronics. (Source: <https://black-friday.global/>)

The question that we get asked a lot is “how do we prepare, manage and regroup after Black Friday?” Afterall, everyone wants a piece of the 2.4 million people shopping on the day. Here are a few tips and tricks to get you through:

1. Understand the real value of Black Friday

I often find myself in meetings where our clients are very happy with the massive turnover that they have made on Black Friday. However, if they sold 1000 items at R100 on a normal day, then 1000 items at R45 with their markdown, the difference is R55 000 – quite a large amount of money for a small business. Also imagine this scenario tenfold, R550 000 is nothing to scoff at.

So for us as a performance and eCommerce agency, the focus is more on other points – primarily data. The value of the new customers you acquire can quickly overtake the low margins made on the BFCM weekend. Say you acquire 2000 new subscribers via pop ups or push notifications, it would be better to gauge the lifetime value of these new potential customers. Using these 2000 subscribers, you could forecast that 16% would potentially come back and purchase. Those that were just deal-hunting would probably unsubscribe, but those that stay subscribed more than likely have a genuine interest in what you are trying to sell.

The crux of Black Friday is that your campaigns should not be revenue driven, but should rather focus on capturing new long-term customers.

2. Your planning should have started already

If you haven't started planning, I would suggest you get going as soon as possible. Try to have your artwork, promotions, emailers, ads and customer service teams ready at least one week before the 29th of November. The power of online is that most of these campaign points can be automated; powerful tools such as Mailchimp and Facebook Ads Manager allow you to set things up well in advance. The last thing you want to be doing the day before is fumbling around.

Let's face it – things will go wrong, but at least you will be prepared.

3. Customer Service is key

If you don't have a customer service team, I suggest cancelling any plans you have over the BFCM weekend. I'm sure many of you reading this would have experienced some sort of annoyance over the last BFCM – whether it be items going out of stock, slow sites or payment gateways not working.

As store owners, we know that some of these things are out of our control. However, the customer does not. How you handle these interactions will directly impact on point one above on the longevity of returning customers. Great service and going above and beyond are key to growing your business.

4. There are going to be delays

For those going into their first BFCM, I'm going to give you the truth: there are going to be delays (sorry uAfrica – it's not your fault!). As eCommerce and demand grows in South Africa, the courier companies have kept up. The trend I have seen over the past three years is that orders will tend to take 7 to 9 days to arrive due to the sheer volume and backlog that they experience. An average medium sized store should expect between 100 to 250 orders, which all need to be picked, packed and shipped. This ties in to point two above: make sure that you have the manpower to handle the influx.

On this note – remember to communicate clearly on your site and other outward communication that the deliveries will take longer due to the courier companies being at capacity.

5. Make sure your site is fast, clean and easy to navigate

How long do users stay on a web page? Most stick around less than fifteen seconds. That's how long you have to capture someone's attention on your website. So if you don't do that in less than a quarter of a minute, you've lost them. Make sure that your site loads in under six seconds and that your navigation and user experience allows the user to get to a product in under three clicks.

For those of you not using Shopify and using platforms like Magento or WooCommerce (sorry for you, but there is a good chance that your site may crash), make sure that you chat to your hosting providers to increase the amount of resources available to you. You can also make use of CDN services such as Cloudflare

6. Stock

Just as a final note – be sure to order Black Friday-specific stock. This can be a great way to offload some unwanted or undersold stock holdings.

If you need a hand in planning your BFCM, please feel free to reach out to us through the uAfrica team. All the best for the silly season and happy selling!

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