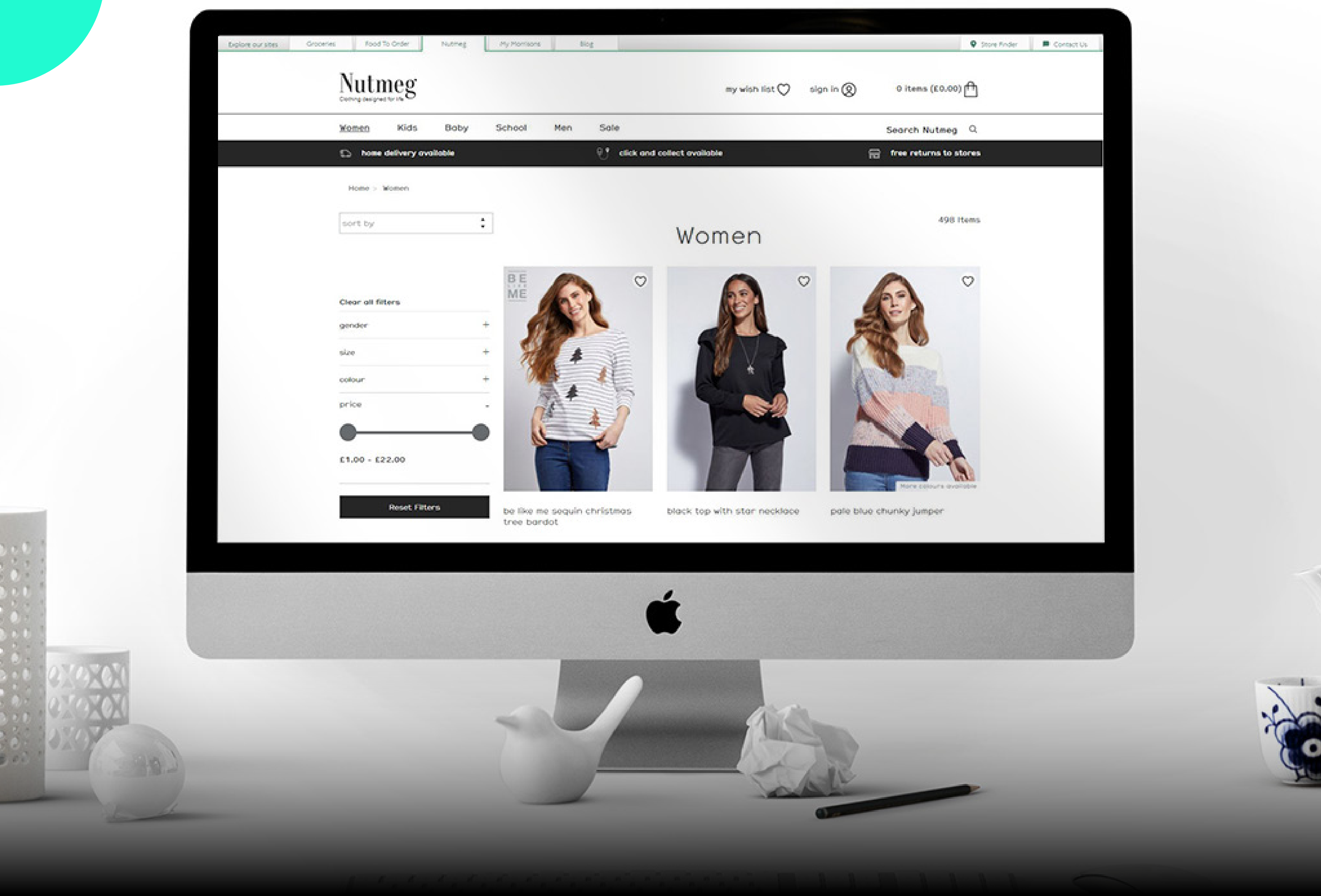

The Kooomo Black Friday Guide 2021

Essential tips and advice to drive eCommerce success on the most popular shopping day of the year.

WWW.KOOOMO.COM

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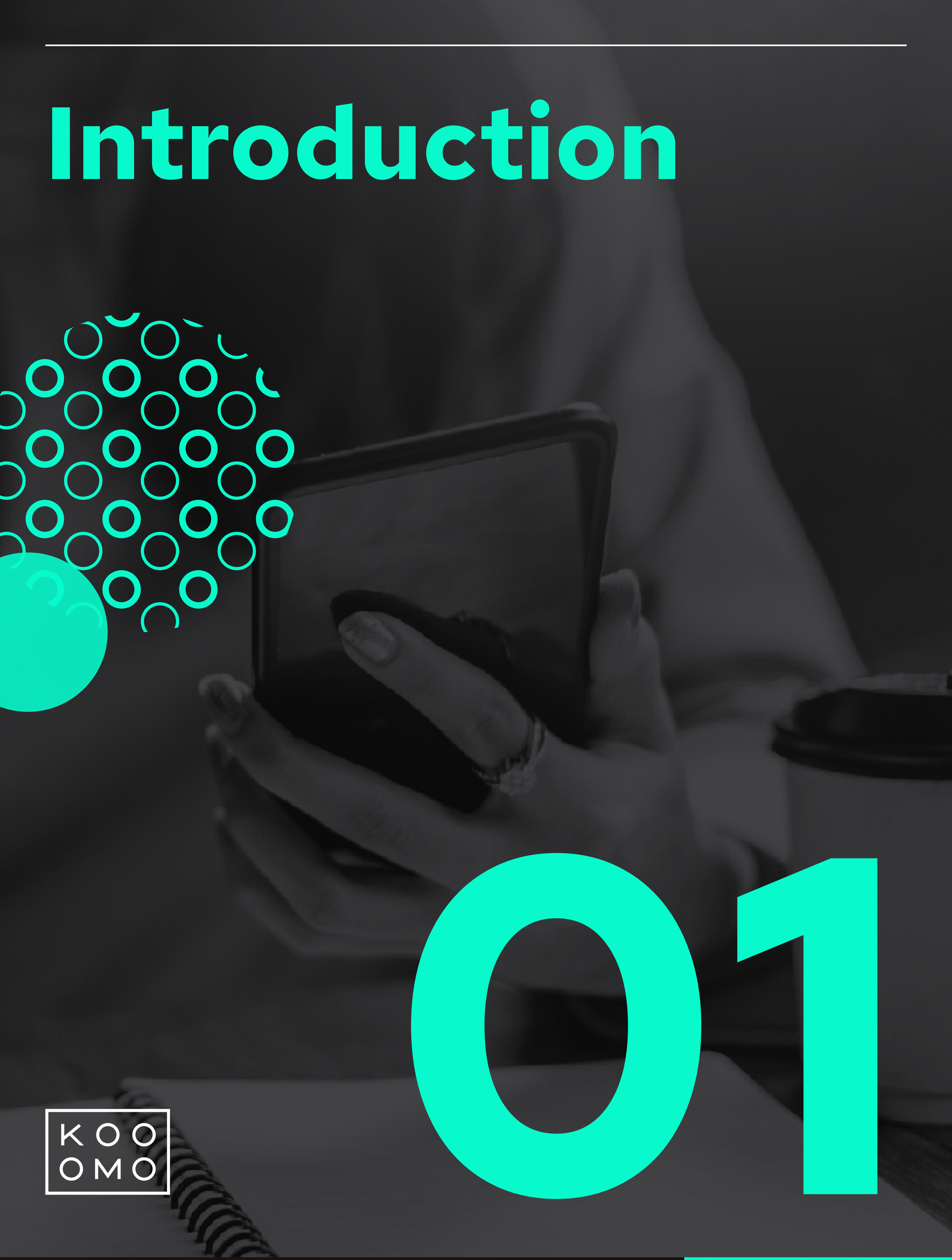


01

Introduction

Welcome to Black Friday – the biggest date in the retail calendar. Imported from the US, the shopping event has made its way across the globe with increasing uptake year on year. With Black Friday and Cyber Monday falling on the 26th and 29th of November respectively, retailers are preparing, not just to battle it out against each other, but also for a return to bricks and mortar!

Last year, the spending weekend could be characterised digitally, with physical retail outlets at the mercy of fluctuating Covid19 restrictions. However, freedom has been restored and the doors are open – but will this mean consumers shy away from the habits they developed during lockdown? Unlikely.

Long story short, preparations for Black Friday 2021 could be summarised by the following:

Go mobile. Go omnichannel. Start early. Perfect the CX.

But you know we'd never leave you without a paddle like that – take our hand as we walk you through all the steps you need to prepare your store successfully. We've reflected on the "New Normal", new consumer habits, new consumer advice and called in industry experts to offer their two cents on what to expect and where to focus your efforts.

New Consumer Habits 2021

02

New Consumer Habits 2021

Infographic

Content

330%

Retailers who utilised Black Friday landing pages saw a 330% revenue increase on the monthly average.

Kooomo

Black Friday

50%

Conversion rates increased by 50%.

Kooomo

Mobile

2020

In 2020, mobile purchases accounted for

52%

of overall

Black Friday sales.

Kooomo

44%

of consumers have made purchases on smartphones in the last year.

PWC

Retailers who added Black Friday labels & standard offer category pages increased revenue by

160%

on monthly average.

Kooomo

38%

Increased conversion rates by 38%.

Kooomo

Mobile cart abandonment during

Black Friday 2020

73%

Increased 73% compared to the previous year.

Barilliance

Loyalty

Consumer loyalty is wavering
PWC

Features

1 in 3

1 in 3 customers would ditch a brand after just one bad experience.
The Drum

73%

of those intend to continue seeking out new brands in the future.
PWC

50% & 39%

50% of consumers are somewhat comfortable sharing info with brands while 39% are not comfortable.
Kooomo

36%

of consumers have tried a new product brand in the past year.
PWC

70%

70% of those surveyed are shopping both in-store and online with restrictions lifted.
Kooomo

%

Affordability

Is the most likely factor to influence shoppers over the speed of delivery, product quality and brand morals.
Kooomo

70%

of consumers are more likely to spend more money when their preferred payment method is an option.
BigCommerce

61%

of shoppers prefer to purchase on sites that offer AR experience.
DataWatch

97%

of online shoppers expect the ability to monitor their orders throughout every step of the shipping process - preferably by SMS or email.
Sendcloud

What we learned from 2020

03

Mobile optimisation – a missed opportunity

Another year, another shift towards mobile purchasing. Over Black Friday Weekend 2020, mobile accounted for more than half of our overall sales, followed by desktop and tablet respectively. It may seem like a no-brainer to add mobile to your sales channels but creating a frictionless experience is still something many retailers struggle to do successfully.

Mobile cart abandonment increased by 73% over Black Friday on the previous year, happening typically at the checkout stage. Awkward payment methods, account requirements and hidden costs can generally cause shoppers to abandon ship - or in this case, basket.

When it comes to mobile optimisation, we believe certain standards are non-negotiable:

Encourage digital wallets
The bottom line is that you don't want your shopper closing the app or leaving their phone down, especially if it is to search for cards and numbers - this can lead to frustration. You stand to triple your conversion rates by encouraging the use of digital wallets as it allows for a seamless flow from cart to confirmation.

Auto-fill forms are a must
On the note of one-click processes, it's also important to provide the option to check out as a guest and autofill forms.

Forms are a pain to fill out at the best of times, but especially on mobile - by integrating autofill into your website you are saving users time as well as the inconvenience of typing into small fields. Some consumers may be visiting your site for the first time over Black Friday as a mobile user. So, if you want to avoid cart abandonment, it's best to ask your customer to do as little as possible.

Personalise your offering
You should also personalise your mobile messaging and ensure your CX is built on smart recommendations to provide a competitive customer journey. Of people who open a push notification, 54% of users convert from segmented pushes, compared to only 15% who convert from broadcast messages.

(But, balance is essential - bear in mind that 70% of push notification users classify too many interruptions as "Spam" and may result in losing your audience.)

The effect of banners and landing pages

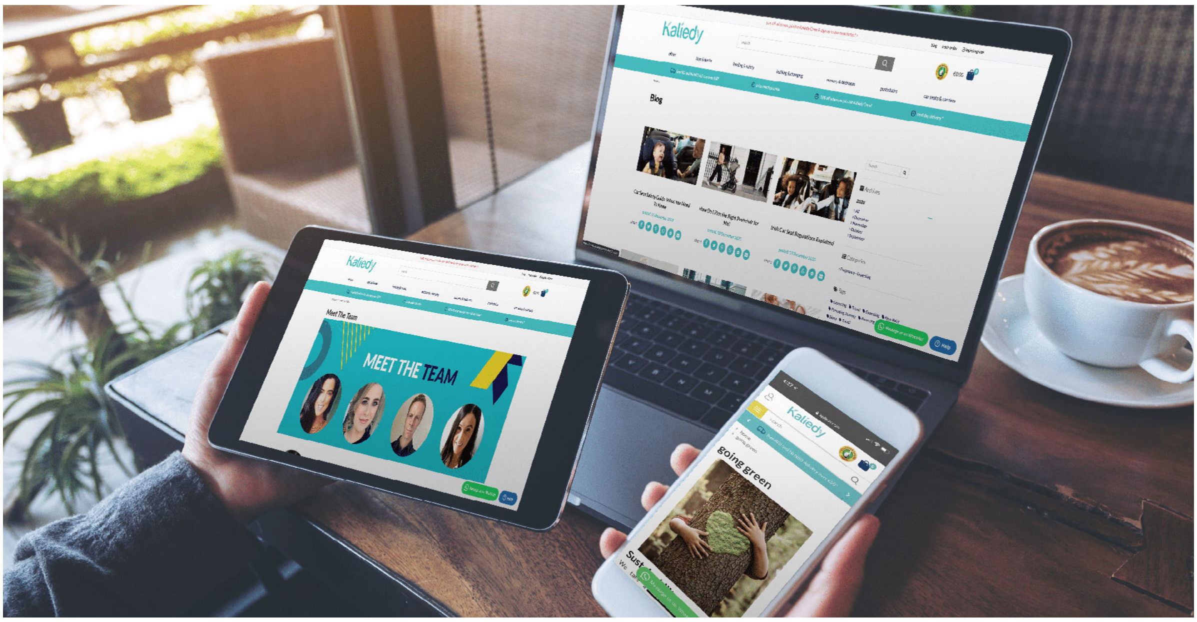
Over Cyber Weekend 2020, our data experts recorded a stark contrast between merchants who used promotional landing pages and tags compared to those who did not.

On average, retailers who:

1. Utilised Black Friday landing pages increased revenue by 330% on a monthly average and increased conversion rates by 50%.
2. Utilised Black Friday labels and standard offer category pages increased revenue by 160% on monthly average increased conversion rates by 38%.
3. Did nothing out of the ordinary, increased revenue by 20% on a monthly average and increased conversion rates by 5%.

We also noted significant results for retailers who created a landing page and also supplemented it with information on deliveries and returns. 25% of traffic visited these pages and showed an increased conversion rate of approx. 30% on the monthly average.

This further supports the idea that clarity and context add to your overall CX. You should always strive to do most of the work on behalf of your consumer too - the less friction, the more likely they are to complete their purchase.



Using Marketplaces to your advantage

Marketplaces are a great way to increase your reach in the run-up to Black Friday – particularly if you're seeking to increase overall sales or want to move unwanted stock.

Globally, 47% of eCommerce sales were made through online marketplaces in 2020, amounting to nearly two trillion dollars. According to Bloomreach, shoppers are twice as likely to start their product searches on Amazon than on Google. However, you can use this as an opportunity to breadcrumb consumers back to your site. For instance, if you sell footwear, perhaps list one particular style or colour on Amazon, that way you are still listing your product, but also enticing potential customers back to your site if they are looking for another colour or style of that particular item.

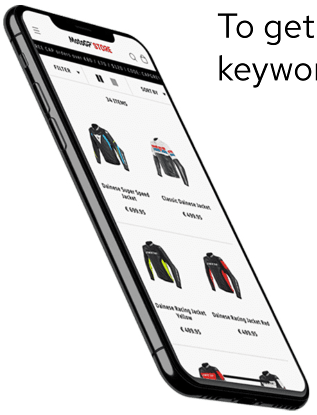
(Kooomo has native integration with Amazon and eBay. This means that Kooomo gives you a unique interface from which you can control stock throughout all the available markets of eBay and Amazon, plus the eCommerce channel – avoiding the risk of potential "out of stocks".)

Strategise for organic traffic

You should start preparing an SEO strategy ASAP to boost organic traffic and sales for your online business ahead of Black Friday. Promote your eCommerce store to customers who are most likely to be spending during the Black Friday and Cyber Monday weekend - but how do you do that?

By anticipating your potential customers through search queries on Google. If you want your online store on page one of the search results, now is the time to begin your campaign, conduct keyword research and get as many backlinks to your website as possible.

How to create keyword research for Black Friday



To get a position on Google SERP for high search volume keywords, you should target the following:

- Keywords with a focus on Black Friday and Cyber Monday
- Your product keywords
- Buzz keywords associated with the holiday season

When creating your keyword research, you should consider the following:

Search Volume:
The search volume will show you the number of people searching for that keyword. We recommend you grab all your keyword data from Ahrefs.

Keyword Difficulty:
This is determined by how many different businesses rank for this keyword at the moment. The lower the score is, the easier it will be to rank for that keyword.

Search Engine Results Page details:
This metric displays which links are performing best, which lets you know which types of content your audience is clicking on.

Online Competition:
Verify which pages are ranking for that keyword, and how the content on that page is structured. Adopt a similar strategy so that you rank in the same way as your competitors.

Other ways to optimise your website:

1. **Create seasonal content** to help with the relevance of your keyword research and keep your brand in people's minds in the buying process. Videos, infographics and images are a good way to attract people's attention either on your website and social media.
2. **Have a Black Friday page year-round** that is linked even when it's not Black Friday. This page should not be added to the main navigation, but having a page live all year builds authority and purpose for the *right* keywords.
3. **Build a different page for Cyber Monday** – even if it seems like Black Friday and Cyber Monday are related, they are two different events. With Black Friday, many exclusive offers can be found in-store, compared to Cyber Monday, which is *just* online. If you are planning on scheduling two different promotions for both days, you should create pages for both of them, as "Cyber Monday" itself gets a lot of search volume.
4. **Build specific SEO links for seasonal pages.** To rank for similar Black Friday keywords, you will need to get links from other retailers, news publications and websites which display all deals to rank organically above your competitors.
5. **Create buying guides related to your Black Friday offers.** For example, using titles like **"Top 10…", "Black Friday wishlist",** which will attract audiences. Adding images and videos will make your content more engaging and could increase your CTR.

Consumer advice

04

Consumer advice

We've analysed consumer advice websites to gauge how shoppers are preparing for the shopping event and put together our top tips to help you get ready.

With Black Friday falling on November 26th this year, consumers are already researching legitimate Black Friday deals, new online businesses and creating wishlists. Not to mention that they are ready to return to the high street with restrictions eased.

So, how can you prepare your online store for the Black Friday sales?

Price Tracking

Consumer Advice:
Consumers are much savvier in general – but they are also being advised to track the price of products to ensure the discount represents a genuine net reduction.

Our advice:
Stay true to your discounts and avoid slick sales methods. The ball is very much in the consumers' court this year – brand loyalty has been tested since the pandemic and shoppers are open to exploring their options. This means they will shop around based on the best deals, experiences and what is in stock.

In a 2020 study of online UK retailers Which? found that 85% of items they tracked were available at the same price or cheaper in the 6 months leading up to Black Friday.

We advise you to steer clear of price inflating, to create a solid reputation that keeps customers coming back long after Black Friday weekend.

Be Cautious Of Unusual Brands

Consumer Advice:
Surging eCommerce sales led to an increase in fraud since the pandemic. Consumer advice sites recommend that consumers be wary of unusual and knock-off brands; stating "there is a reason some are household names and some only crop in a sale".

Our advice:
Build up your brand legitimacy in the run-up to Black Friday/Cyber Monday using reviews and accurate and transparent information. Now is the time to assess your reviews – while no one wants a bad review, a site with only glowing reports can arouse suspicion. Use this time to respond to feedback – both positive and negative to show that you're a company that cares about what it's shoppers have to say.

Use UGC (User-generated content) to showcase your customer community and how consumers interact with your products. A third of shoppers prefer to see a product used or worn by real people in real situations. opposed to professional product images.

When it comes to the information on your site, make sure information on delivery costs, delivery times and customs fees are in plain sight. Extra costs are the number one reason consumers abandon their carts – having all your cards on the table can help to avoid this.

Consider Your Payment Options Now

Consumer Advice:
Credit cards add an extra layer of protection but can quickly become an issue if you overdo it. Trusted payment methods will also look for authentication so have mobiles, apps etc ready to go for approvals.

Our advice:
48% of consumers do not feel comfortable entering their financial data to pay online. If you wish to alleviate your shoppers' concerns you need to show that you are protecting them - Apple Pay, PayPal, and Google Pay have all cultivated reputable names for themselves. These payment methods not only simplify the checkout process but also eases consumers' security concerns.

Set Up Online Accounts In Advance

Consumer Advice:
Many consumer advice websites suggest creating an account and wishlists ahead of time with their preferred retailers. This will allow them to pre-enter delivery details and payment information to quickly complete purchases when the golden quarter rolls around.

Our advice:
Behind unexpected fees, having to create a user account upon checking out is the second most common reason for cart abandonment. The solution? Get this process out of the way ahead of time by asking for signup upon initial entry to the website - you can even incentivise this now with a discount for first time members.

This will improve usability when Black Friday arrives and create the opportunity to get to know your consumer and build personalised email marketing campaigns. Personalised offerings are a key differentiator for audiences with 72% of consumers only responding to personalised promotions.

Use Click & Collect Options

Consumer Advice:
Restrictions have eased and normality is returning - which means the golden quarter can maintain an element of the in-store experience. Consumer advice guides are encouraging shoppers to use click and collect options this year as a means of reducing their delivery fees.

Our advice:
Earlier in 2021, 70% of respondents to our social media poll indicated that they intend to shop both in-store and online once normality returns. This means strengthening your omnichannel presence now in preparation for journeys that start online, end in-store and vice versa. However, just offering click and collect is not enough to create a competitive experience. Strengthening your click and collect offering begins with testing your technology, implementing a tracking system and preparing your store and staff for the procedures.

Start Your Black Friday Shopping Early

Consumer Advice:
Black Friday is no longer a 24-hour flash sale - retailers are launching their offers earlier and earlier each year with many running promotions through the whole of November. Consumers are advised not to wait until Black Friday itself to search for bargains, as they run the risk missing out on the best deals.

Our advice:
If you begin your sales promotions the week of, you might already be starting on the back foot. Consumers are planning and budgeting well in advance of the 26th itself - therefore, we recommend you communicate and open your offers up to audiences well in advance. This can be done through banners, social media and email marketing, with specially curated offers for your loyal customers. Your goal is to maximise sales, not to invite lengthy queues - so spread your offers across the month.

(This can be assisted by a comprehensive and flexible promotions engine such as that offered by Kooomo - Merchants can, therefore, craft and manage specific types of promotions across a range of conditions such as coupons available to a specific geographic location, currency, or user-group. But you can find out more about it here.)

Experts predictions for 2021

05

Experts predictions for 2021

We reached out to industry experts across the many aspects of eCommerce for insight into how to strengthen your Black Friday offering. From Logistics to Augmented reality, our tech partners are answering the question:

“What can retailers expect ahead of this year’s Black Friday and how best can they prepare their store?”

Logistics

Black Friday and Cyber Monday continue to be the busiest and most important times of the year in the retail calendar. Can we expect the same level of growth this year as we saw in 2020? While we expect to see a definite increase in physical shopping rates this Black Friday (compared to 2020), it is not to say online retailers will not be busy - both physical and online stores should be fully prepared to go big or go home.

Expanding sales windows is a great supply chain planning tactic to spread the demand over a more manageable timeframe. This can allow retailers to have the tools to tackle the Black Friday rush in place and tested, knowing what should be altered before it is too late to do so. More and more online shopping sites release their sales several weeks in advance, and retailers must ensure they have a solid supply chain in place to deal with not only Black Friday, but the entire month of November, moving into December. The key to surviving this period is full preparation and the use of transparent logistic tools that limit any confusion as operations become increasingly busy.

Black Friday and Cyber Monday are the times of the year where retail technology is of extra benefit to the companies' processes. Businesses can use supply chain forecasting, focus groups and surveys throughout the summer months to establish trend items and ensure stores and warehouses are stocked with a large quantity of ready-to-go items. multi-client or overflow warehousing to handle increased inventory for peak seasons if needed.

Driver and temporary staffing shortages pose a substantial threat. Resilience for retailers will require flexibility, and unified, omnichannel experiences for consumers. While the circumstances between this year and last have altered, and as we have seen physical store demand increase month on month since their reopening, it is safe to say that Cyber Week 2021 will still drive colossal online volumes. The demand for online retail has become a permanent fixture in consumer attitudes, and the focus should be on delivering the best experience both online and offline.

RORY O'CONNOR, CEO AND FOUNDER SCURRI

Payment Methods

As retailers prepare for Black Friday and other peak sales periods, here are three ways payments can help:

1. **Kill the queue**
   There's nothing like the sight of a long line snaking around a store to prompt a shopper to abandon their purchase. In one year, long queues cost UK retailers over £11bn. Fortunately, technology can help with mobile point of sale (mPOS), which lets customers pay from anywhere in the store. The latest generation of mPOS also lets you consolidate payments, inventory management, and clienteling into a device the size of a smartphone.

2. **Make buying easy**
   Contactless payments are expected as standard these days. So are mobile wallets like Apple Pay and Google Pay. These wallets are not only easy to use but very secure. With strong customer authentication (like biometrics) built into the payment flow, they can help protect both you and your shoppers. QR codes are also growing in popularity, letting shoppers pay with eCommerce methods like PayPal and AmazonPay. Another important consideration is local payment methods. Chinese shoppers, for example, will expect to be able to pay using methods like Alipay and WeChat Pay.

3. **Connect your channels**
   Black Friday sales won't be restricted to physical stores and shoppers will be just as (if not more) active online. So it's important to provide a cohesive experience across all channels. Endless aisles and cross-channel returns are good ways to streamline your customer experience and keep shoppers coming back long after your sales have ended.

COLIN NEIL, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF ADYEN UK

CX

1. **First, we highly recommend running tests on your server to see how it holds up when traffic levels surge.**
   If past Black Fridays have gone off without a hitch, you shouldn't necessarily expect the same this year. Throughout 2021, more consumers have transitioned to online shopping as their first choice, so traffic could reach new heights.

2. **You'll also want to ensure that your site is fully optimised for mobile users.**
   This dictum is important for web-based businesses across all industries, but it's essential for eCommerce stores heading into the November/December rush. A third essential element of your Black Friday prep should be getting an SSL certificate if you don't have one. Your SSL certificate signals to customers that they can safely input their data into your website and make a purchase. This added level of security is more vital than ever as consumer data concerns continue to shape the online landscape, even driving monoliths like Apple and Google to take steps to prevent the sharing of customer data.

3. **Now for the fun part:**
   Making your store look snazzy for the big day. The Studioworx design team recommends a homepage banner and custom stickers for your products. Instead of your customary 'SALE' sticker displayed on a product, you might consider a special Black Friday sticker in colours that match your banner. If you stock tech products and plan to stretch your sale into Cyber Monday, don't forget to signal this on your banner.

DAN HUSSEY, LEAD UX DESIGNER – STUDIOWORX

Personalisation

We believe the most important goal is to be mobile-ready. Mobile use has been growing rapidly since 2015. In 2021, 54% of traffic was through mobile channels. Nielson then did a study to see how much scrolling is done on a mobile eCommerce site. This research told us that the battle for Black Friday is won and lost in the first 1.5 scrolls - **And the key to success is how you use your data in that space.**

Use an AI Personalisation tool with a serious engine like a hybrid collaborative tool, similar to Amazon's, to predict what your visitors' needs are before they even know. Give them the ultimate personalised experience: A Dynamic Banner that plays product videos connected to each segment. Follow your visitors with their needs and desires rather than making them search. Use the 6-inch window with 1.5 scrolls and 8 mins of attention span wisely. Take the risk out of the "above the line" by using their data to merchandise the page. Dynamic containers with powerful category rocks algorithms and personalised top sellers are the best way to go here.

Invite your visitor to get lost - Let them "fall down a rabbit hole" and end up with a cart twice the usual size. Defy every web designers' beliefs by using a Horizontal scroll. Use Smart offers, which Amazon uses to create those amazing "Aha!" moments, and Top Seller to always offer fresh ideas that are relevant to the visitor. Develop your customers' tastes and product knowledge with recommendations across categories.

Use a hover slider with a leading product to entice more scrolling. Show a bit of the next product and lure visitors into exploring.

Benchmarks

Following this Black Friday strategy is bound to:

- Drop your bounce rate by a minimum of 18%,
- Increase your AOV by 20% minimum, and
- Create loyal customers that will revisit

KEN CONDON, GLOBAL CHANNEL DIRECTOR – SEGMENTIFY

Features - AR/VR

Today, there are already more than 100 million consumers who consciously make purchases using the experience in AR both online and in physical stores.

Augmented reality turns your eCommerce into an advanced sales tool by creating immersive shopping experiences that improve conversion rates and sales. Augmented reality provides users with a deeper, realistic and personalized shopping experience.

At ItsReal, we've seen the following results from using AR as part of an eCommerce strategy:

* 205% increase in turnover
* Increased sales efficiency by 34%
* Conversion rate increase of 94%
* 30% optimization of sales processes
* 44% increase in performance, thanks to the perception of the value of the product or services offered and consequently also of the Brand.

Augmented reality is already the future of shopping - brands that embrace change can become dominant players in the sector, those that do not will lag behind competitors. 88% of mid-sized companies are experimenting with AR to grow their business.

TOMMASO REDAELLI, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER AND CO-FOUNDER OF ITSREAL

Strategy

As we know, Black Friday has become one of the most important campaigns of the year, over the last few years, and represents a high percentage of turnover.

In such a competitive environment and with the presence of major marketplaces such as Amazon, AliExpress and others, standing out on Black Friday becomes a very important creative exercise for retailers.

We highlight 4 points to keep in mind for Black Friday:

1. **The price:** the price strategy is very important and has been changing over the years, being much more aggressive in previous years, so we always recommend doing a previous benchmark of our competition to establish the pricing strategy and discounts and not decrease the net margin. Other useful ideas can be to carry out campaigns focused on less conventional discounts than the typical "up to XX% discount", for example, buy 2 products and we offer you 20%, buy 3 and 30%...

2. **Added value:** discounts are not everything! You can add to your campaign gifts for your customers, gift cards to encourage repurchase or other actions. We must differentiate ourselves from the competition and offer our customers something more to make them choose us.

3. **The message and creativity:** Be creative when communicating Black Friday, as your customers are going to receive a lot of inputs during this period and you must stand out from the rest.

4. **Channels and investment:** Choose the right channels to communicate and make a forecast of advertising investment if necessary, the possibilities are many: emailing, social media, paid media, affiliation...

In conclusion, with an attractive and creative strategy that positions us above our competitors, and, of course, a good product, you can achieve great results on black Friday with a reasonable margin.

ALEX GASPAR, GROWTH HACKING MANAGER – ZEROGREY

Conclusion

06

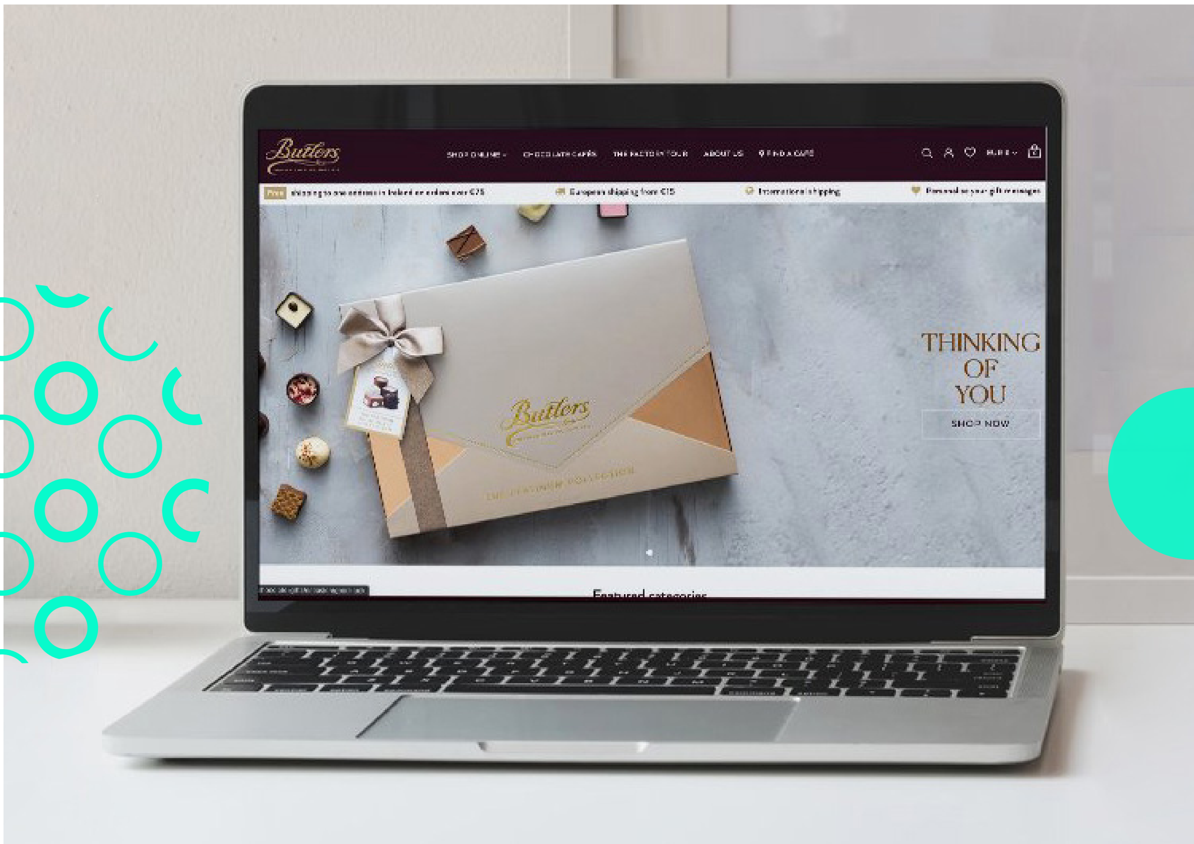
Conclusion

While normality somewhat returns to Black Friday this year, the transformation process continues - from its beginning as a rail sale holiday in the US, the shopping event has grown into a month-long affair spanning digital and physical outlets. This is set to be the biggest year yet for mobile shopping and there will be a serious thirst for in-store experiences that are supplemented by digital elements.

The retailers who set their sights on optimising all their sales channels for a seamless customer journey from phone to laptop to store and back again stand to make the biggest splash. Savvy consumers aren't just on the hunt for value as convenience and security will also play a major role in maximising conversion rates.

Keep an eye on our social media pages and newsletters as we continue to bring you news and advice in the run-up to the big day - and if you have any queries about how the Kooomo platform can support your business, don't hesitate to book in a chat with our team.

Until next year!



Thank You

Contact:

- IRELAND +353 1 878 7387
- UK + 44 20 8068 6058
- ITALY +39 069 480 7468

Email:
sales@kooomo.com

Address:
Kooomo, 4 Pembroke Street Upper, Dublin 2, D02 VN24, Ireland