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*BLACK FRIDAY / CYBER MONDAY*

**2022 ECOMMERCE  
PREP GUIDE**

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## HEY THERE,

It goes without saying that **Black Friday / Cyber Monday (BFCM)** is a huge deal in the world of eCommerce. Last year Shopify merchants made over [\\$6.3 billion USD](#) in global sales during the holiday season, and 2022 is on track to be record-breaking. If you're not preparing to ensure you have one of your most profitable holiday seasons yet, now's the time to start. And if the thought of everything you need to do leaves you feeling overwhelmed, don't worry - we're here to help.



***In this guide,*** you'll find some of our best insights, tips and strategies to help you prepare for BFCM. We cover everything from ads to email marketing and metrics you'll want to track to measure your success.

If you start preparing now, Q4 will be a huge success for you. Do a little work each week, and before you know it, you'll feel relaxed and ready to crush your BFCM goals.

***Get ready to have one of your most successful BFCM yet.***



## LET'S GO.

***Cory Dobbin*** , CSO, SHOELACE

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## **PREPARING YOUR *ECOMMERCE BUSINESS***

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It's never too soon to start preparing for the holiday season. More and more people are skipping the in-store lines and shopping from home. As a retailer, you should be taking advantage of all the ways to increase your online sales during these holidays. Black Friday and Cyber Monday offer great opportunities to increase revenue and reach more people than any other time during the year. But, if you don't prepare, you might miss out on the opportunity to capitalize during this time. We'll walk you through our best tips for preparation on the next few pages.

## 1.1 OPTIMIZING YOUR WEBSITE

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If you want to make sure your customers have a great experience while browsing your site, you need to optimize not only the desktop version, but also the mobile one. Mobile is still king when it comes to online shopping so don't disregard it. In 2021, [71%](#) of BFCM purchases were made from mobile devices, compared to 29% on desktops. So, let's discuss what you can do to ensure your success on both desktop and mobile!

### ***CRO Tip. 1***

## **BEST PRACTICES IN OPTIMIZATION**

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The best place to start when optimizing is taking a look at your CRO (*Conversion Rate Optimization*). CRO is the ongoing practice of optimizing your web pages to increase the likelihood of your visitors taking a desired action on that page. This could mean getting customers to add an item to cart or directing them to subscribe to your email lists. When done correctly, CRO will not only lower your customer acquisition cost (CAC) but become one of the most cost-effective ways to increase profit. Some of the best practices for CRO include ensuring pages load quickly, optimizing product images and copy, building trust with reviews, and properly defining your CTAs (*call to actions*). You can read more about optimizations for each of these on our blog [here](#).



Next best optimizations would be to improve your mobile SEO and mobile user experience. When users can effectively navigate to and through your site, you are making it easier for them to complete their purchase flow quickly. Some of the things you can do to improve this are:

- ***Ensure each of your pages loads quickly***
- ***Include mobile-friendly responsive designs*** that can adapt to any screen
- ***Optimize your images*** by making them as small as possible while retaining quality and ensuring each image has alt text
- ***Use plenty of keywords on each page to improve SEO*** (try using long tail keywords as well)
- ***Minimize redirects & remove any broken links***



## *CRO Tip. 2*

### **HAVE CLEAR & CONCISE FAQ**

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Make it clear to your customers exactly how you operate. By ensuring your FAQ pages are up to date with the most accurate info, customers will be able to move through the purchase flow much quicker. Your FAQ pages should be up to date with shipping info, holiday return window, and contact info. Each answer should be short, but make sure it's a complete answer without having to link to another page. Be sure to write the answer from the customers' perspective. This will help to make it clear and eliminate any friction someone might have before they buy.

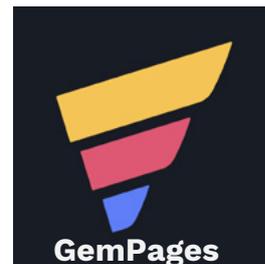
## *CRO Tip. 3*

### **CREATE SPECIAL LANDING PAGES**

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Creating a dedicated landing page for your BFCM campaigns is another optimization you can make to your website. It comes with a slew of benefits not only for your website but for your paid advertising as well. With a dedicated landing page you can hone in on your campaign and have that page focus on your Black Friday and Cyber Monday goals. When the promo is located on one page, it helps to simplify the decision making process for your customers. Also, by creating a dedicated landing page, you can send all your paid advertising to it. Doing this will let you easily track your BFCM data to better understand your sales for years to come.

**But how can you create a landing page quickly and easily?** Well, Shopify has many free and paid apps to help you create your landing pages as efficiently as possible. Such as these three below:





## ***CRO Tip. 4***

### **WIN AT CUSTOMER SERVICE**



Providing clear and concise communication with your customers is vital, and that includes any customer service communications. This is the busiest shopping time of the year, so you should set clear expectations for when customers can reach you (i.e include contact times and info throughout your website). You should also specify when customers should expect to get a response from you so they won't feel like you're ignoring them. Review your return policy and update it accordingly. Finally, if you don't already have one implemented, consider adding a Helpdesk to your website tech stack. A Helpdesk is a tool you can use on your website to help customers answer questions and get immediate answers by adding a messaging system to your website. An app like [Zendesk](#) or [Gorgias](#) can help with that, by providing chat functionality and even an AI ticketing system to better respond to awaiting customers.

## 1.2 INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

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No one wants to feel left out, and you especially don't want to leave your customers missing out on a good deal if you sell out of something. Making sure your inventory is ready for the upcoming season will have a direct impact on your sales. As a business owner, you should be using your previous years' metrics to determine how much product to stock for this coming season. Plan out your sale and campaign details far in advance, and order your items to arrive in stock in plenty of time. If you currently have overstock of a certain product, consider making it a featured product in your sales promotions. In this way, you are tying your promotions to your current inventory.

When the dust settles on BFCM, if you have any excess inventory left, you can always plan for an Overstock Sale in January to kick off the new year!

## 1.3 CREDIT CARD CONSIDERATIONS

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An important part of your BFCM campaign is your advertising. Every second your ads are running is crucial to keeping potential customers coming to your site. You do not want your ads to stop running midway through the campaign, as this could result in a lot of lost business. So before you start to run your ads, check your budgets and make sure the credit card linked to your Facebook, Google, Pinterest, TikTok etc, has enough funds available to run throughout the duration of the campaign.

## 1.4 START AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

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Start now! Once you have an idea of what product and promotions you'll have available for BFCM, it's just a matter of preparing a schedule for your business on what needs to be done and when. It's important to start as soon as possible, so that you aren't scrambling at the last minute to get creative made or upload videos to Facebook. Trust us, it will be a huge load off your business (and your mind!) to prepare and set everything up now.

*“Every **second** your ads are running is crucial to keeping potential customers coming to your site. You **do not** want your ads to stop running midway through the campaign... **check your budgets** & make sure the credit cards linked to your socials have enough funds available to run **throughout the duration of the campaign!**”*

Section 1.3

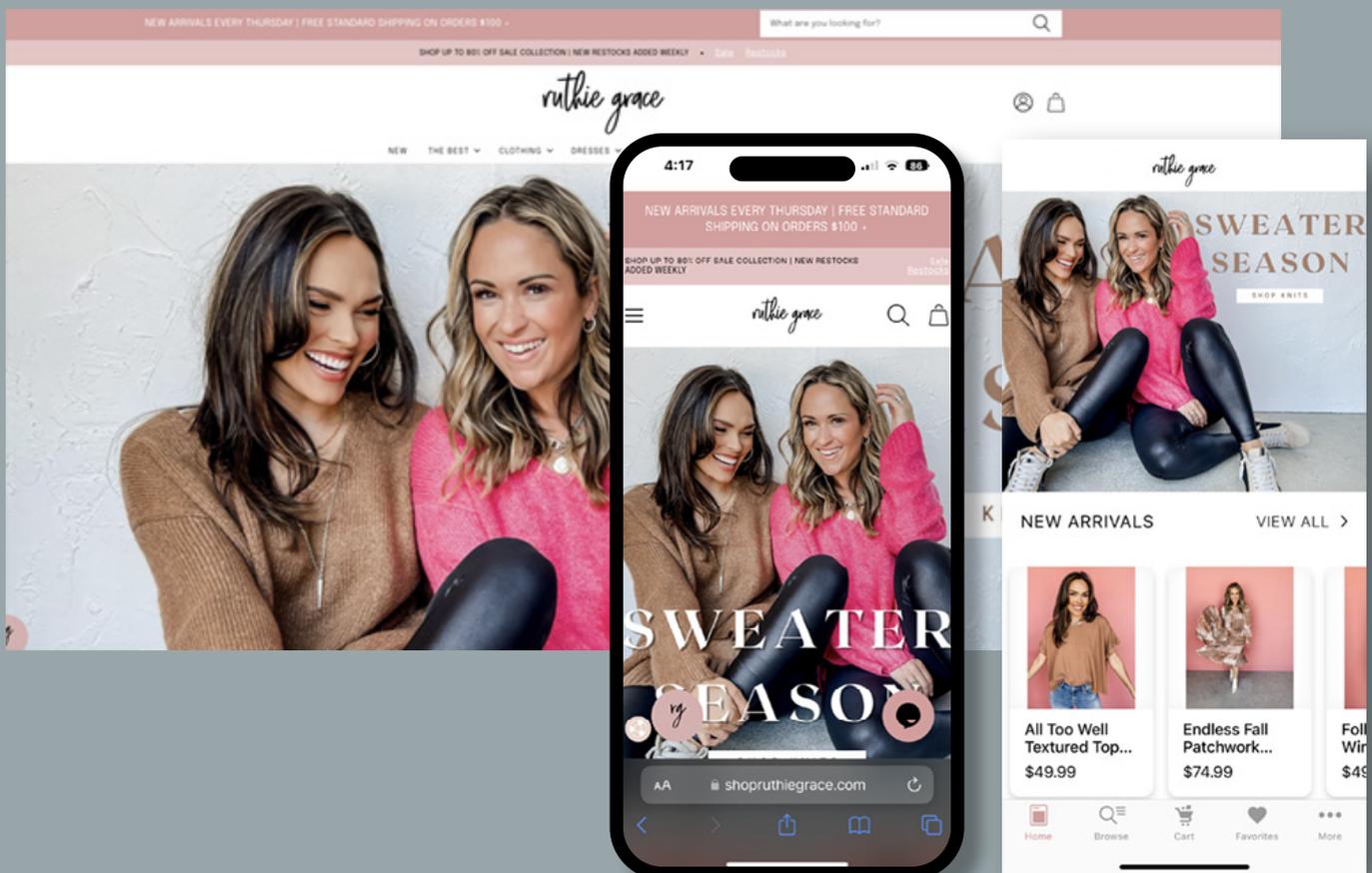


## 1.5 HAVING STRONG CREATIVE

There is a lot (and we mean A LOT) of competition out there. Your business needs to do everything it can to stand out from the crowd, especially during this holiday season when your brand (and its promotions) are being stacked against your competitors'. Having strong, well-designed creatives can make a huge difference in influencing the consumer's buying decisions.

### Tip 1 - Have a cohesive design across all channels

For starters, your promotional material should be consistent with every piece of media you put out. This includes your social media channels, website, ads, and emails. This way, your customers will be more likely to easily spot the promotion and understand what you are trying to sell during BFCM. Creating a cohesive experience also makes your brand look more appealing to those who may be unfamiliar with it.



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## Tip 2 - CREATE A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT CREATIVES

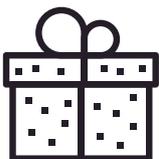
You need plenty of creatives (not just ad creatives) to be ready for BFCM. Thankfully, we've got you covered with this handy-dandy list below.

- Website Banners
- Website Pop Ups
- Email Images
- Social Media Organic Post Images
- Social Media Organic Post Videos
- Minimum x3 Paid Ad Images (sized properly per platform)
- Minimum x3 Paid Ad Videos (sized properly per platform)



## Tip 3 - LEVERAGE GIFS & TEXT IN YOUR DESIGNS

Last year during BFCM, Shoelace clients had great success leveraging gifs to showcase their products and discounts in their ad creative. We also took top performing creatives and used text overlay for the BFCM offer.



*Camila Lamar, Marketing Operations Manager at Shoelace*

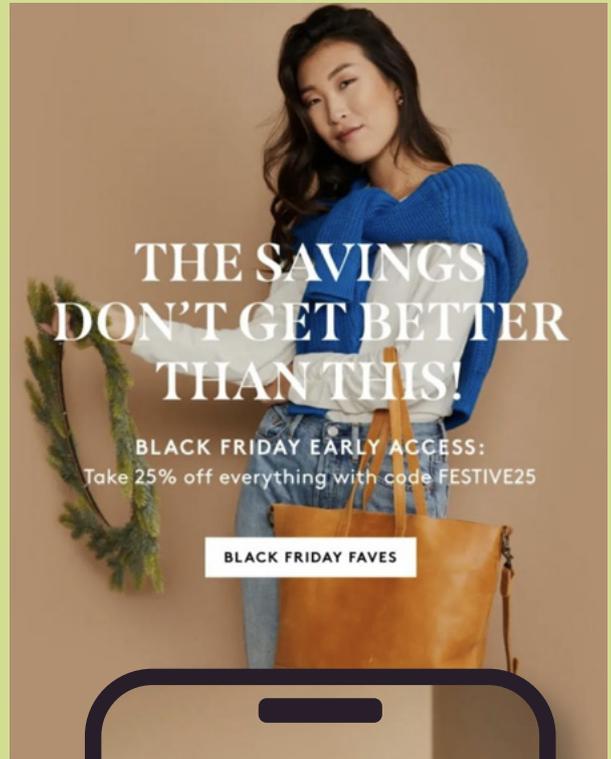
“The best performing creatives for BFCM were catalog-based carousel ads with the offer intro card. Most of these creatives were best performers within the last 3-4 months with the discount overlay, nothing fancy.”

## Tip 4 - CREATIVE BEST PRACTICES

Generating creative for your ad account can be time consuming, so to address this issue we are proud to announce that Shoelace now offers creative services to our clients!

We've already discussed the different kinds of creatives you'll need to make for your campaign, but what about the contents of those designs? Once you determine what your promotion will be, it should be the main focus of your creatives. Whether it's a percentage off your products, or a **BOGO (Buy One, Get One)** campaign, the promotion details need to be clearly displayed across all your media channels. Consumers should easily be able to tell what it is you are offering to them. Your **CTA's** should also be included in your creatives across all marketing channels.

Lastly, but probably the most important, **use a legible font!** At a glance, few people can clearly read cursive or decorative fonts very well. Aim to use a font that's on brand, bold and ideally sans-serif.



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## **RUNNING ADS *ON SOCIAL MEDIA***

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Running paid ads on social media is still the most effective way for your brand to be discovered by potential customers. It's also an important marketing tool to keep your brand top of mind for people who have already purchased from you in the past, where you can invite them to re-engage with you and place another order. Put careful consideration into your BFCM paid ads strategy because it can generate the bulk of your sales over the holiday season.

## 2.1 CRAFTING A KILLER OFFER

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Regarding the promotions and discounts you'll be offering for BFCM, it's essential to keep in mind the level of competition during this time of year. Most brands will offer discounts and advertise them aggressively throughout their different marketing platforms. Given the competitive landscape during this season, you must ensure your offer is attractive enough to stand out from the rest. If you were thinking about giving 10% discounts or including a free sample with every purchase, think again, as these are unlikely to pique potential consumers' interest.

### Tip 1 - Simplicity Is Vital

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Your offer has to be a no-brainer for customers, meaning it should be as simple as possible. Remember, consumers are targeted with dozens, if not hundreds, of offers at once during this period, so your strategy should be a simple and easy-to-understand sale. Overcomplicated sales might confuse clients, increase the likelihood of them second-guessing themselves, and even stop them from buying entirely. Some simple offers you could implement include:

- **Store-wide, flat discounts**
- **Buy one, get one free**
- **Bundled products**

Crafting an offer that resonates with your customer base can be difficult but rewarding. You should have a good idea of who your audience is and what they like. Using past BFCM and sales data, you should get a better idea of how they shop and what exactly influences their purchasing decisions. Some of our Shoelace clients had



very unique offers for BFCM, because they knew it would be more effective in influencing their current customers. One client last year created a tiered discount (Spend \$100 get 15% off, Spend \$200 get 25% off). Another client used gifting as an add-on to their sale (i.e Spend \$XXX, get a free gift bag/box). Your offer should be exciting to your prospective customers, while not trying to undervalue the product. At the end of the day, you know your customers best and with the help of past data, you can determine an effective promotional strategy.

*“**Remember**, consumers are targeted with dozens, if not hundreds, of offers at once during this period, so your **strategy should be a simple and easy-to-understand sale.**”*

Section 2.1



SALE

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## Tip 2 - GO BIG OR GO HOME... BUT DON'T GO TOO BIG!

Small discounts will generally not push the needle with clients looking for the best deal with their limited resources. 10-20% flat offers are unlikely to stand out and will have your potential buyers taking their money elsewhere. Make sure to craft sales that stand out and get noticed by clients. At the same time, however, 70-80% discount offers have the risk of under-valuing your brand.



*Jessica Khan, Growth Marketer at Shoelace*

“Craft an offer that isn’t boring but doesn’t undervalue the products. People expect big for BFCM so a 10-20% offer isn’t going to intrigue them and 70-80% can undervalue a high quality brand.”

## Tip 3 - DON'T BE GENERIC; CRAFT A SALE THAT WORKS FOR YOUR BRAND

Many resources state that they have the one tried-and-true BFCM discount scheme that will take your business to the next level. While these are useful, it’s also vital to consider your unique business needs.

**Ask yourself the following questions to determine the best offer for your business:**

- What are my goals for BFCM?
- What discounts can I offer based on my cost per conversion?
- What discounts can I offer based on my profit margin?
- How can I keep the AOV (Average Order Value) as high as possible?
- What is my particular audience most likely to respond to?
- What past promotions performed the best?

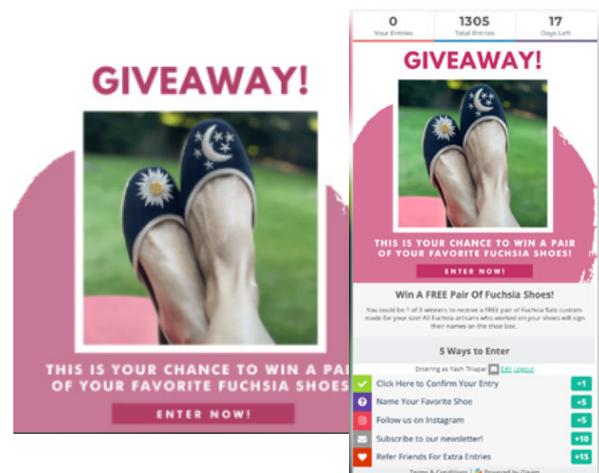
Overall, be mindful that this is one of the busiest times of year and thousands of brands will be trying to get consumers’ attention. Get ahead of the game by crafting a killer offer that will get customers hyped about purchasing from you!

## 2.2 LAUNCHING CAMPAIGNS EARLY

Deciding on when to officially launch your campaign should be based on budgeting and what makes sense for your brand. Having a week-long 10% off sitewide sale may not sound exciting, but could be the start of your initial presale leading up to your larger promotions during the exact days of BFCM. In case you want to try it for yourself, here are some examples of last year's success stories for early campaign set ups:

### Success Tip #1

Create some excitement around your brand and tease your upcoming sales! You can create advanced hot lists that you can then retarget to with either paid ads or email campaigns. One of our Shoelace clients started a campaign a month prior to BFCM, by enticing customers to submit their email to enter a contest to win one of their products. This generated over 4000+ new emails for them which they were then able to retarget over the holiday season with an email flow specifically for this list.



### Success Tip #2

Get more bang for your buck by running your prospect ads & lead generation earlier in the month! Once BFCM begins, switch your budget to focus back to retargeting campaigns. This allows you to gather as many people as possible from your cold campaign audiences into your retargeting sales funnel. A Shoelace client did just this last year and they had great success in terms of CPL (Cost Per Lead), which after the campaign was less than \$1 per lead! This allowed us to leverage one of the best-performing audiences of Q4 for the client, which consisted of all the new prospecting customers from the Lead Gen campaign.

### Success Tip #3

By running multiple campaigns, our client Ruthie Grace saw greater returns over the course of November than just from a single BFCM campaign. We started the month off with a “pre-BFCM” campaign running from November 16–30, which resulted in 13.35x ROAS. Compared to their BFCM campaign, running from Nov 24–30, which resulted in 11.39x ROAS. Both fantastic results, but by running a campaign earlier in the month you have less competition and therefore will be paying less for ads at that time. Another bonus is having more time for the Facebook algorithm to learn how to better showcase your ads.

## 2.3 MAKING ORGANIC SOCIAL COUNT TOO

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Leading up to BFCM, most brands tend to focus on paid ad spend and email strategies. However, it's also important to consider your organic content scheduled during this period. A robust social media strategy will allow you to cut through the noise during this season.

### TIP 1 - START EARLY

Like your paid media strategy, your organic content should focus on building the hype for your upcoming sale in the weeks leading up to BFCM. This will help build awareness of your upcoming offer and increase engagement with potential customers.

### TIP 2 - CREATE URGENCY

Generating a sense of urgency with your messaging is crucial. Make sure to let your customers know that the sale will run for a limited time only. Emphasizing scarcity and limited inventory is also a great strategy to incentivize sales. This will compel customers to finalize their purchase before the sale ends or the item they're interested in runs out of stock.

### TIP 3 - INCLUDE CLEAR CTAS IN YOUR POSTS

Make sure to incorporate a clear call to action in your posts. This will work as a signpost for potential customers, letting them know what to do next. Not including a clear CTA could lead to customers not following up with your post and making it less memorable.

Overall, if done correctly, your organic content will complement your paid and email strategies. More touchpoints will mean a greater likelihood customers remember your sale and remain engaged in the weeks leading up to BFCM.



# 3

## **MEASURING THE SUCCESS *OF YOUR CAMPAIGNS***

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When tracking metrics during BFCM, deciding which ones are the most important for your business can be overwhelming. Don't worry, we're here to help with letting you know the basic metrics you should keep an eye on for paid media this upcoming BFCM.

## 3. MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF YOUR CAMPAIGNS

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When tracking metrics during BFCM, deciding which ones are the most important for your business can be overwhelming. Don't worry, we're here to help with letting you know the basic metrics you should keep an eye on for paid media this upcoming BFCM.

### Cost per Mille CPM

CPM is the cost per 1000 impressions of your ad. This is a valuable metric to track as it will help you determine your advertising costs during BFCM. Remember, due to the increased competition during this period, these numbers will likely be higher than during other times of the year.

#### CPM FORMULA

$$\frac{\text{Ad Spend}}{\text{Impressions}} \times 1000$$

### Link Click Through Rate CTR

Link CTR is the percentage of times people see your ad and click on it. This is a valuable metric for gauging how effective your ad copy and creative is for getting people to click on your ad and go to your website.

#### LINK CTR FORMULA

$$\frac{\text{\# of link clicks}}{\text{\# of impressions}}$$

“ROAS stands for the **Return On Ad Spend**... It’s **important** to note that this metric within Ads Manager platforms (e.g., Facebook and Instagram) works with **modeled data** and tends to **under-report** actual performance numbers.”

Section 3



## 3. MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF YOUR CAMPAIGNS

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### ROAS & Revenue

ROAS stands for the Return On Ad Spend. It is a metric used to determine the return of your campaigns compared to the ad spend. A ROAS over 1 means that the campaign generated more money than it cost. It's important to note that this metric within Ads Manager platforms (e.g., Facebook and Instagram) works with modeled data and tends to under-report actual performance numbers. Similarly, the purchase conversion value is also a modeled metric that determines the revenue generated by your campaigns.

#### ROAS FORMULA

$$\frac{\text{Campaign Revenue}}{\text{Ad Spend}}$$

### Cost per Acquisition CPA

This metric measures the average cost of a customer's action on your website. This can be anything from signing up for your newsletter to purchasing a product. For BFCM, in particular, it's essential to focus on realized sales.

#### CPA FORMULA

$$\frac{\text{Ad Spend}}{\text{\# of sales}}$$

With these metrics, you should be fully equipped to measure the effectiveness of your campaigns during and after BFCM.

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**CONNECTING**  
***WITH EMAIL***

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Email marketing is a powerful tool when it comes to promoting sales. It generates one of the highest ROI on average across all marketing channels. Given this, brands need to include email marketing in their BFCM strategies to take their sales to the next level. Stay tuned for some tips and tricks to take your email strategy to the next level this season!

## 4.1 CREATE SPECIFIC TEMPLATES & CONTENT FOR BFCM

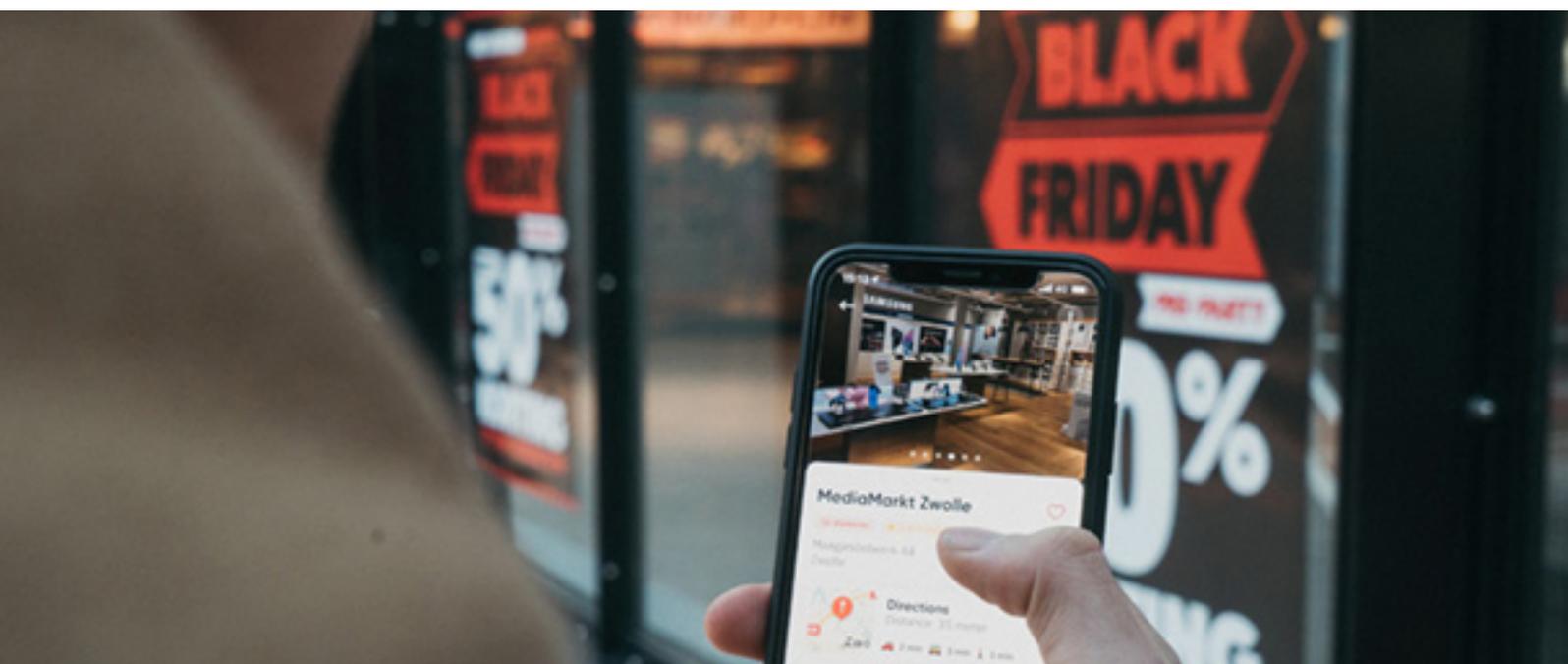
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Regarding content during BFCM and the holiday season, your email templates should vary from your regular flows. You don't have to go overboard with it, but your email subscribers need to see these emails as distinct.

As the first touch point, your subject line will decide whether the client opens the email or tosses it to the deleted folder. Make sure to be clear and to the point with a subject line of no more than **50 characters**. "Black Friday Sale Starts NOW – 25% Off Storewide" and "Black Friday Starts Now" are two examples of short, eye-catching subject lines to grow your email's readership.

The body of your email should also be short and to the point, with the value proposition and sale clearly featured. Clients will be bombarded with dozens of emails during this period, so making sure yours stands out is essential.

Lastly, create a sense of urgency to get recipients to act with clear, end-of-sale dates. This will encourage them to take advantage of the limited-time offer before time runs out.



## 4.2 MAKE SURE YOUR FLOWS REFLECT BFCM'S TIMELINE

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Timing is everything during BFCM. Send your emails too early, and your subscribers will forget about your sale. Send them too late, and your clients will ignore your emails as they're bombarded with other deals. Generally, the best time to start sending emails is around early November, giving you time to build the hype and get ahead of the competition.

Furthermore, if you haven't done so already, set up abandoned cart flows. These are automated emails sent to potential clients who add items to their cart and leave your website without completing their purchase. They aim to take the client across the finish line and complete the sale.

During BFCM, for your abandoned cart flow, a great strategy is to reduce the time delays between emails. This is because shoppers are more active during this time, and if they're not on your website, they're probably browsing another brand. We'd recommend sending out three automated emails for cart abandoners within the BFCM period:

### 1. Reminder Email

*(25-35 minutes after the cart was abandoned)*

This is your opportunity to reach the client while they're still active. They might have too many tabs open, and while they're interested in your brand, they might be browsing several others.

### 2. Discount & Deadline Message

*(6-8 hours after the cart was abandoned)*

By this point, the goal is to entice the client further to complete the purchase through additional incentives, such as the ladder discounts based on their cart total.

### 3. Final Reminder

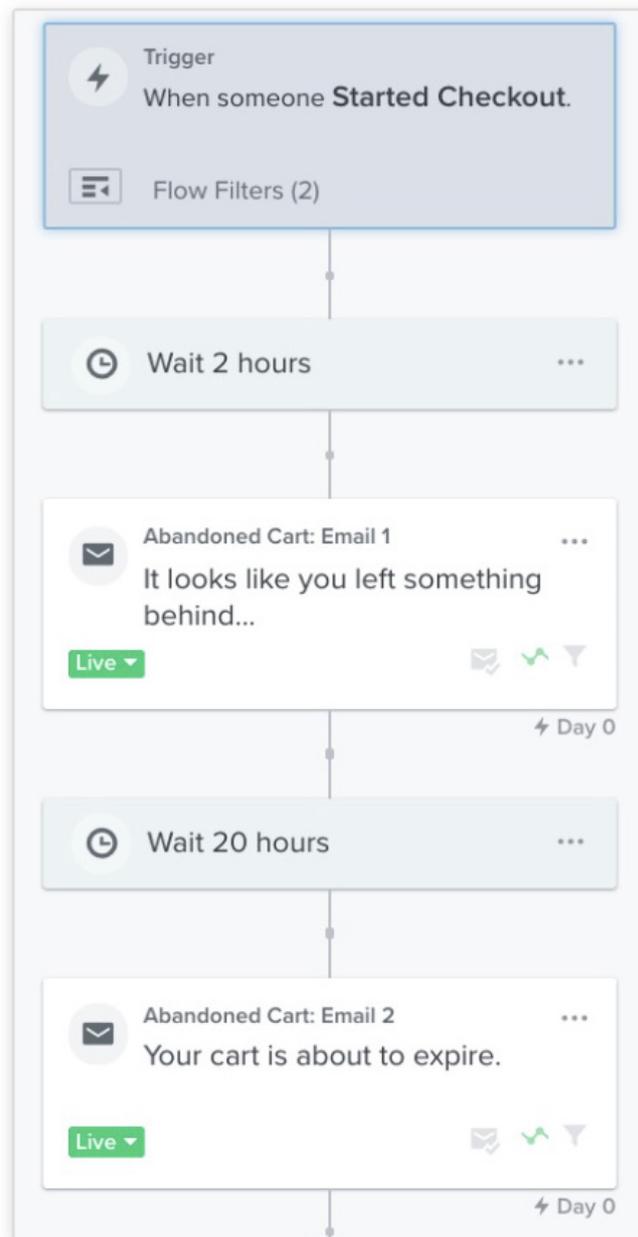
*(24 hours after the cart was abandoned)*

As the name implies, this is the last chance in the flow for the client to make the purchase, ensuring you've done all you can to get them back on your site.



“During BFCM, for your **abandoned cart flow**, a great strategy is to reduce the time delays between emails. This is because shoppers are **more active** during this time, and if they’re not on your website, they’re probably browsing **another brand.**”

Section 4.2



## 4.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF SEGMENTATION DURING BFCM

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In email marketing, segmenting your audience will ensure you get the right messaging and offer to the right people. Depending on your business' size, you might need to segment by behaviour, geographic location, age, language, etc. However, for smaller brands, you should consider at least the following segments with distinct messaging:

- **Last Year's Shoppers**
- **Loyal Customers**
- **Website visitors who haven't purchased yet**
- **Shoppers looking for deals**

## 4.4 BEST EMAIL PRACTICES FOR SCHEDULING & FREQUENCY

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Promoting during BFCM can be pretty stressful and overwhelming, especially regarding email marketing, where it can be daunting to decide how many emails to send and when to send them.

Boost your send frequency during the period leading up to BFCM to keep your brand and deal top-of-mind for clients

as a bare minimum; you should send 3-4 emails during this period. For a more aggressive strategy, you could send up to 7-10 email newsletters starting 1-2 weeks before BFCM. Furthermore, time your emails around key shopping dates and times based on your brand's historical data.

## 4.5 THOUGHTS ON EMAIL MARKETING

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*Dylan Fladhamer, Email Marketing Lead @ Shoelace*

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“For those already familiar with BFCM, you know just how quickly paid media costs can go up and ad dollars get funneled into these platforms. Email inboxes will also get flooded, but they don’t get more expensive to send. That’s why having a strong list growth strategy starting months before BFCM is important. You can spend ad dollars right now for lead generation, while they are still appropriately priced. That way come BFCM weekend, you have a much larger list of interested customers who you can send your email marketing to.

Email marketing is one of the tried and true channels for retention when looking at full funnel marketing. Due to it being an owned channel (aka you own the data, whereas with paid media you are paying for access to those users), your cost to send marketing isn’t inflated during times like BFCM or holiday sales. Also, with the proper automations in place, you will capture all that extra purchase intent from the increased holiday traffic on your website, such as with things like Abandon cart flows, browse abandonment flows, welcome series, etc.”

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## THANK YOU FOR READING THIS THROUGH!

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We hope you found some useful tips in this guide that you can start actioning on today. With some preparation, you can have the most successful BFCM yet. The Holiday season is approaching quickly, don't let it catch you unprepared!

If you'd like help growing your ecommerce business, reach out to us at Shoelace to find out how we can help. Shoelace is a full-funnel growth agency that's built to scale brands of all sizes. We create, manage and optimize paid advertising and email campaigns that drive real results for your business.

Connect with us [here](#) to see how we can grow your business.

**START THE CONVERSATION** 

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**CONNECT WITH US**

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[www.shoelace.com](http://www.shoelace.com)