

**PREPARING FOR BFCM:**

# The eCommerce Strategy Blueprint for Black Friday/Cyber Monday

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



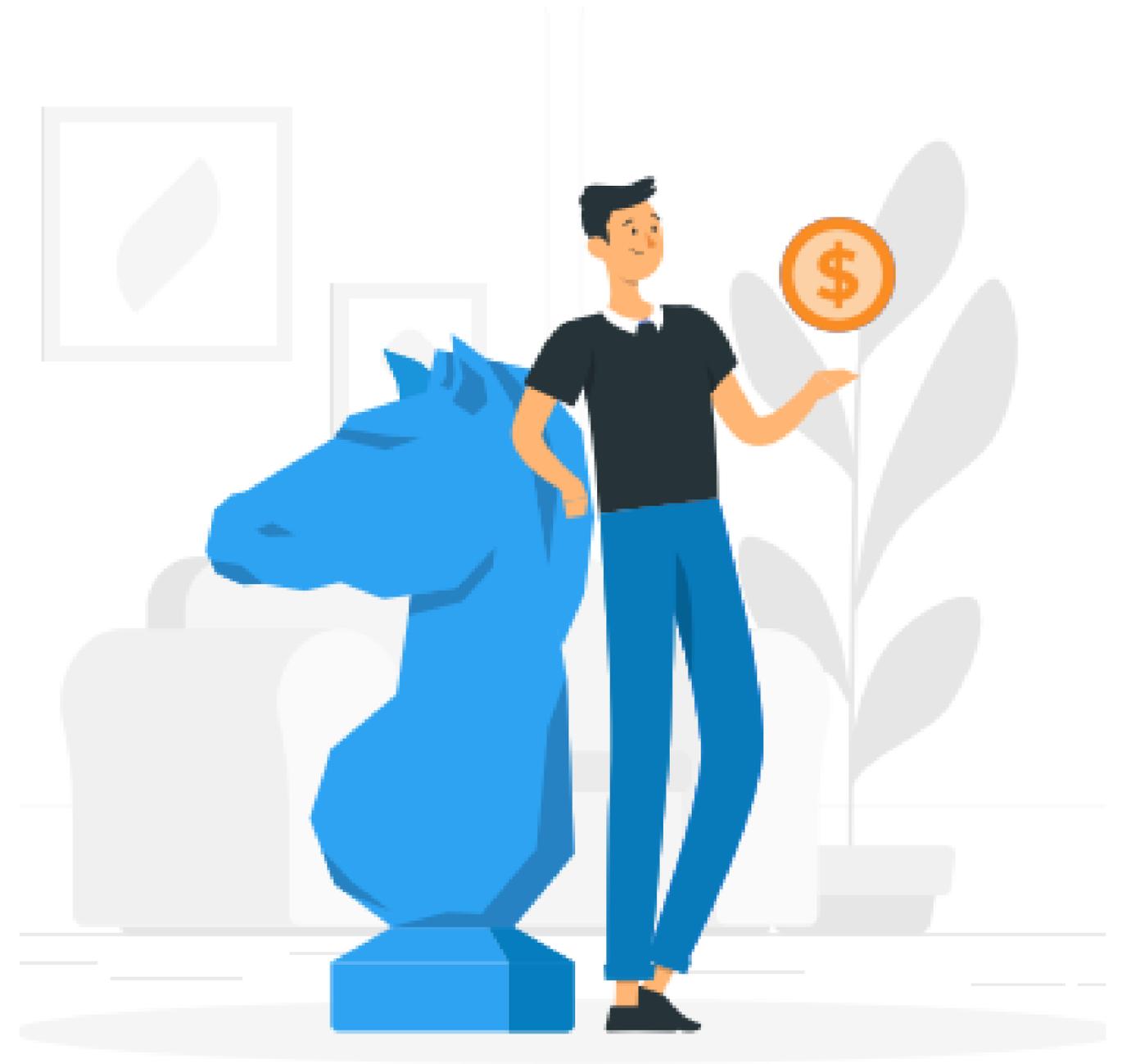
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Black Friday Cyber Monday is definitely one of the biggest killer time for most eCommerce stores. That is why it is crucial for you to really prepare for it ahead of time to ensure that you drive a lot of traffic to your store and handle the surge in traffic and maximize conversion. If you play your cards right, you can drive 50% of your revenue during this time and a big chunk of your annual profits.

But the stakes are high and they get higher every year. Regardless of your market, it's incredibly competitive with everyone doing promotions and upping their marketing game each year. It's also incredibly expensive for advertising at this time of year, with CPM rates for ads spiking 50%-100% at certain times during the holiday shopping season.

If you play your cards right, you'll be smiling at Christmas ending the year strong. But if you blow it, this will be incredibly painful and mess you up going into the new year.



In this post, we're going to walk through a blueprint approach you can use to prepare for Black Friday Cyber Monday and nail this year's holiday season:

- 1** We'll talk through the importance of **starting your ads and emails early**. Question is, how early should it be?
- 2** You'll see **how to craft the perfect offer** that is great for customers – but also healthy for your business.
- 3** We'll walk through the **email and ad sequences** to use for Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and the weeks leading up to Christmas.
- 4** We'll talk through how to **maximize sales with upsells and granular retargeting**.
- 5** You'll see how to **avoid the “oh my god!” mistakes** some businesses make that cause their entire strategy to burn down due to website and systems issues.
- 6** And of course you'll need to **nail customer service** during this busy time.

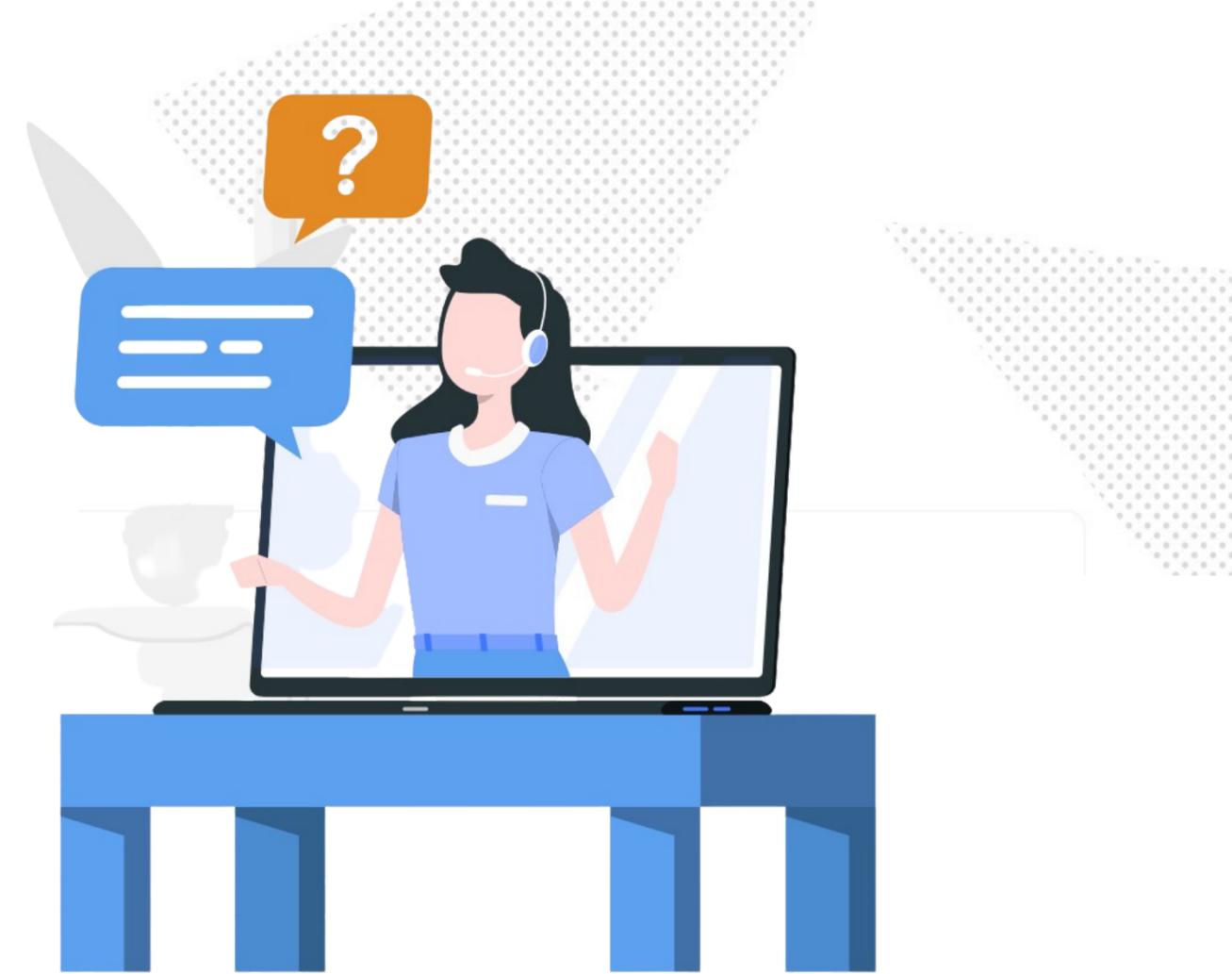
Let's get after it...

# IT ALL STARTS WITH A GREAT OFFER

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Creating a great offer **does not just mean having a steep discount** for your customers. If you do a blanket discount, not only can this cannibalize your sales that may have otherwise happened but it can also cause serious profitability issues during competitive holiday shopping seasons.

- Rather than doing a blanket discount, **consider creating a bundle of products that also integrates discounts**. This can create a sense of scarcity and uniqueness to drive people to purchase during the holiday shopping season without cannibalizing other sales.
- More importantly, using a bundle promotion strategy can increase your average order value compared to simply discounting one off purchases on your website.



In addition to making the offer compelling for customers, it's incredibly important to **know your profitability** during this time.

- Most experts recommend a **1 to 3 or 1 to 5 mark up even during the holiday**. This allows you to cover the increased customer acquisition cost that you will experience during this time while still driving a reasonable profit.
- With that said, you can usually afford to be a little less profitable than usual during this holiday shopping season if you have a great life cycle strategy in place to **turn these first time purchases into ongoing purchases with a high lifetime value**.



The bottom line is you need to have a compelling offer that works for your customers but also works for you as a business.

Once you've nailed the offer, you need to get to work with promotion as early as November 1st.

# WHAT?!? START PROMOTING EARLY?

E-commerce store owners that have not been through years of Black Friday experience might think they should start promoting the week of Thanksgiving, but that's definitely not the case.

The most experienced stores will see **80 to 90% of their Black Friday Cyber Monday revenue come from warm audiences**– and those audiences are not warmed up between Monday and Thursday the week of Thanksgiving. It takes time.



- By running ads between early November and Thanksgiving, you can **introduce and educate the audience** to your product and offer. The call to action should be an **early bird access opt in** that will give them access to the Black Friday Cyber Monday deals before anyone else.
- Not only will you benefit from warming up your audience early to maximize conversions, but you'll also **beat the expensive ad costs that typically start the Monday of Thanksgiving week**. By the time competitors see their CPM rates increase 50 to 100%, you will already have the market on your email list and be promoting your offer at little to no cost.



# PRE BLACK FRIDAY / CYBER MONDAY PROMOTIONAL SEQUENCE

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Here's a typical sequence that can work.

**1** Start promoting the first week of November, with ads to your target audience introducing the product and educating them while offering an email opt in to the early bird access.

**2** Between the first week of November and Thanksgiving, do **3 dedicated promotional emails** to prime your list to buy.

Once you get to the start of Thanksgiving week, you will have an email list that is warmed up and ready to buy so you can start the sale.

**3** For any additional content you put out during this time on your email, blog, or social media, **include a "P.S." line driving them to your early bird opt in offer.**



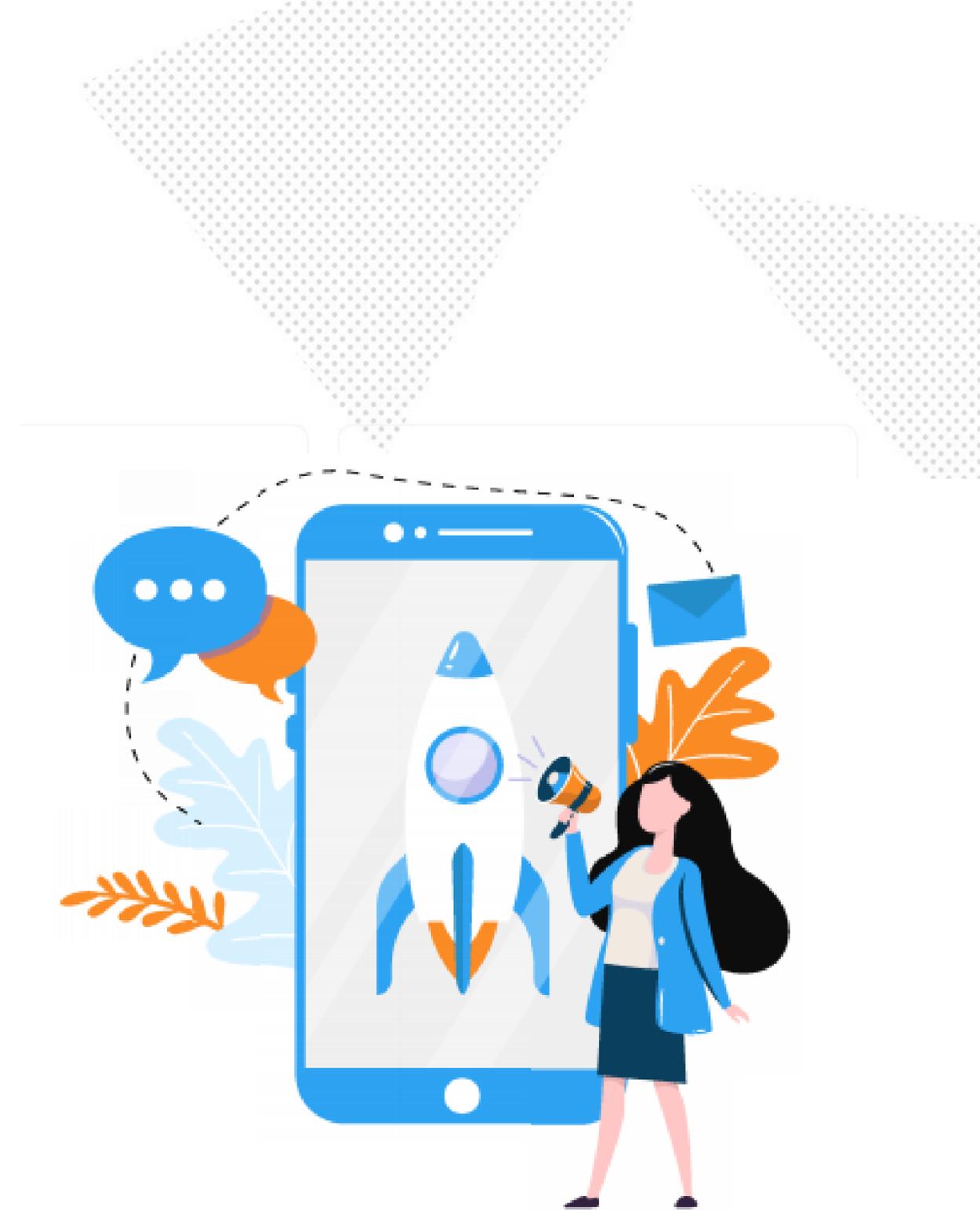
# LAUNCH PLAN FOR THE WEEK OF THANKSGIVING

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**Open up your early bird access Monday or Tuesday before Thanksgiving** by sending promotional emails to the list. You can also target them directly with advertising to break through the clutter they are bound to experience in their email inbox as promotions ramp up in your market.

Depending on your strategy, you usually shouldn't launch the promotion to the public site wide or to your entire email and advertising list until closer to Black Friday.

Below is a sequence that works well for Black Friday / Cyber Monday weekend. It might seem aggressive, but it's a competitive time of year:



**1** **Send a reminder email** Wednesday and possibly Thursday about the Black Friday offer.

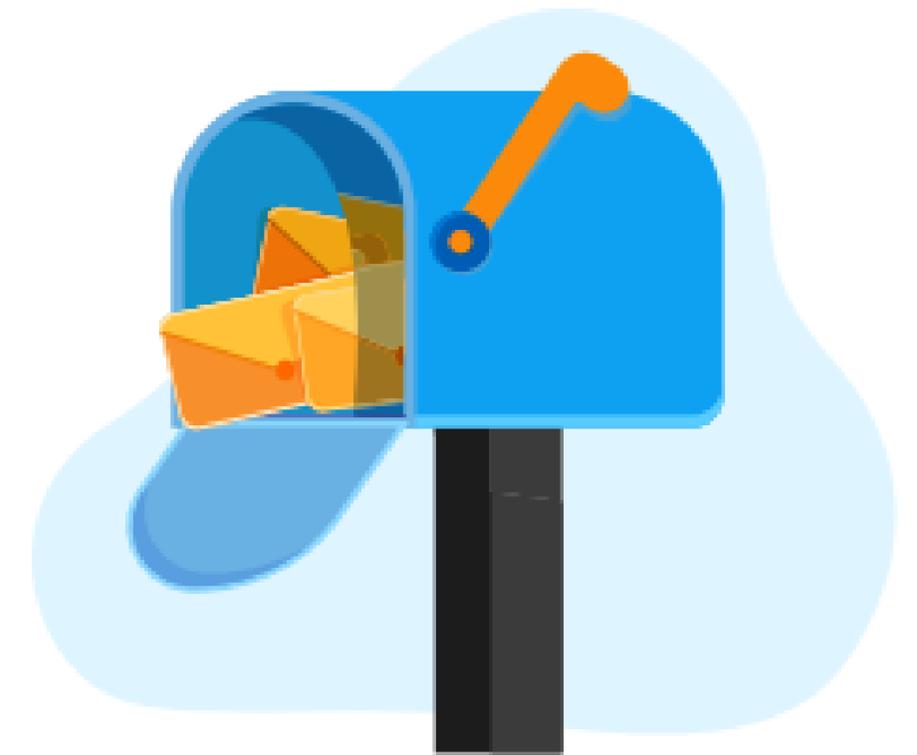
**2** **On Black Friday, send 3 promotional emails** driving people to the offer.

**3** **On Saturday and Sunday send 2 emails each day**, 1 with a promotional offer and 1 with content that educates them further about the product.

**4** **On Cyber Monday, send another 3 promotional emails** driving home the offer.

While sending this amount of emails may seem overboard, you have to remember that the entire market is advertising and emailing hard this entire weekend so **it's important that you are able to break through the clutter**. You can do this by having awesome emails with a great brand voice and a killer offer that stands out.

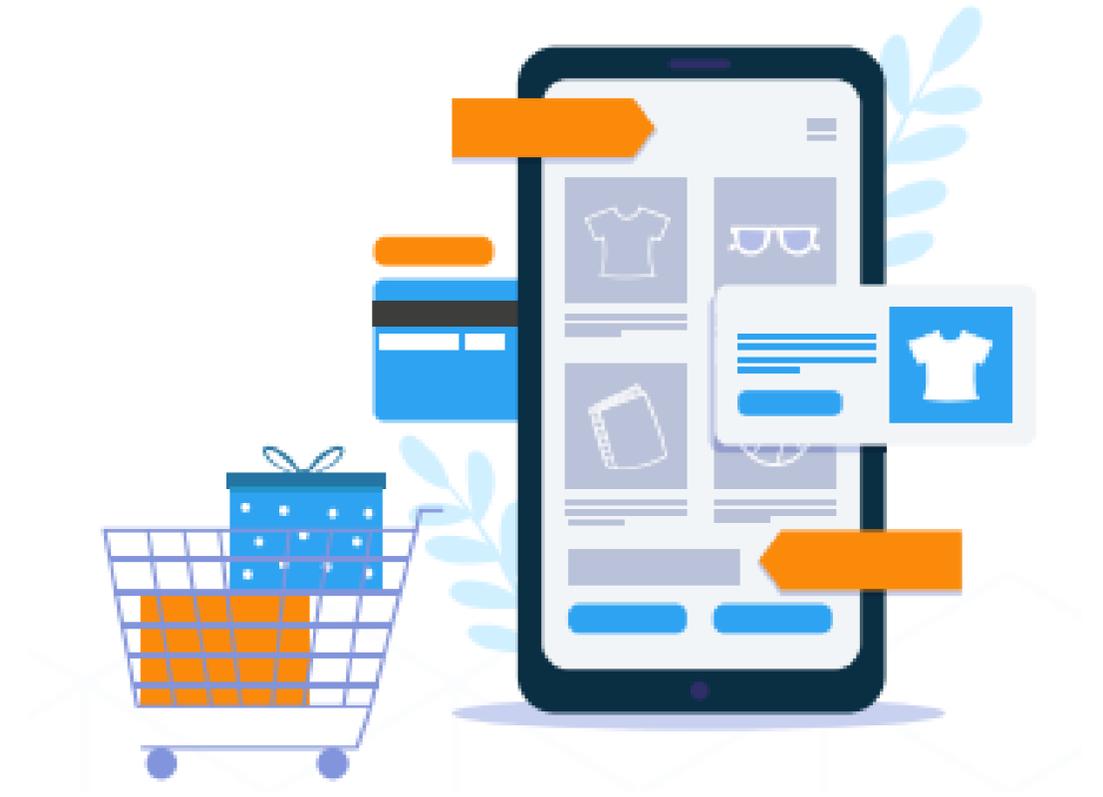
This will drive a ton of sales over the holiday weekend, but you've still got a lot of work to do in the weeks leading up to Christmas to truly nail your goals.



# MAXIMIZE SALES ON BLACK FRIDAY AND CYBER MONDAY WITH LIVE CHAT

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Leveraging a live chat sales team throughout the holiday weekend enables you to ensure your visitors get answers to the questions they have so that they can buy. Remember, they're going to be shopping on a ton of sites during the holiday weekend – so anything you can do to remove friction is helpful.



**If you need help adding a 24 / 7 live chat team to your site, we can help (we run live chat for 100's of eCommerce stores).**

**Book A Strategy Call**

Here are some tips:



Make sure your team is available late into the evening and early morning the entire weekend to maximize sales. People shop at all hours of the holiday weekend.



Set up your live chat to engage with visitors automatically based on their browsing behavior on the site. That way you can be there at the “perfect time” when they have a question.



Ensure that your chat functions in the checkout of your website so you can address questions people have that would otherwise cause them to abandon their cart.



# RETARGET AND UPSELL UNTIL CHRISTMAS

There are going to be a ton of people that engage with your ads, email, and website offer but don't buy for one reason or another. Having an effective retargeting strategy in place is key to get these sales:

**1** You should be running **retargeting ads on all the major advertising networks** in the weeks after Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

**2** In the two weeks after the holiday weekend, send **appx 6 more promotional emails and 2 content emails** that excite people to engage with your brand and drive them to the offer.

**3** In the final 1 to 2 weeks of the holidays before Christmas, do more **promotional emails with a different angle** and bring the campaign to a close. You can use **shipping times to drive scarcity** in the final days of your promotion along with customer **testimonial videos to create FOMO** for people that haven't bought yet.

Aggressive retargeting campaigns with ads and emails will maximize the number of people that buy, but when someone's in the process of buying you can drive up results through an effective upsell strategy.

# CROSS SELLING AND UPSELLING

Once someone chooses to buy your product, **they are primed to buy more.** You can cross sell them related products, or even upsell them more of the same product. It all depends on what your original offer is.



Using a tool like one click upsell for Shopify, you can have **multiple upsell offers running at once to see which performs best** and then lock that in for the rest of the holiday season. This way, your upsell strategy is based on data rather than intuition.



In addition to upselling during the checkout process, nailing your **post purchase email flows** can enable you to drive more sales for the holidays and of course into the new year.

# AVOID THE “OH MY GOD...” BLACK FRIDAY MORNING MOMENT

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If you do even half of what is shared above, you are going to crush your revenue targets for the holiday shopping season. That is of course if you don't get crushed by the volume of traffic and sales these strategies will bring in.

Here are example war stories that are best to never experience...



**1** If you drive a ton of traffic to your website but **your web hosting plan can't handle it, then your website will go down.** Your ads will still run and cost you money, but you'll obviously get no sales. Not a good thing.

**2** Or, let's say you commit to increasing your ad spend but as the holidays get closer **your ads are stuck in review with Facebook.** This can leave you high and dry without any way to get your offer into the market. Super frustrating.

These are just a few of the things that can happen, so it's important to test everything advance and monitor in real time throughout the month and especially the holiday week.

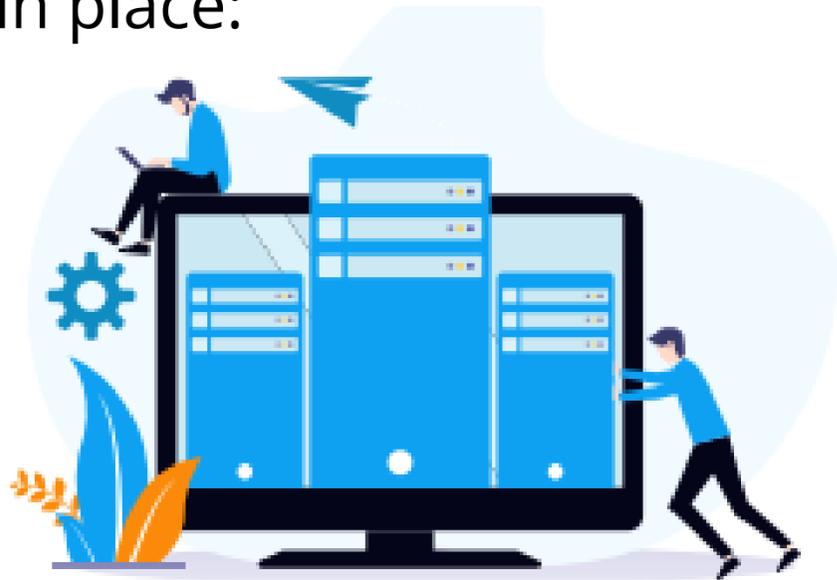
**3** Or maybe your website and ads are running full steam ahead and you've taken weeks to craft the perfect flow of email sequences. A small oversight in email links or automation rules can cause you to think your emails are happening as planned, only to realize later **nobody got the emails they were supposed to get.** Again, huge bummer.



# BASIC TESTING AND DISASTER PREVENTION TACTICS

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Here are a few basics to make sure you have in place:



- 1** If you're using a hosted e-commerce website such as Woo Commerce or Magento, **connect with your web host in advance** to make sure you are on a robust hosting plan that can handle traffic spikes. Upgrading for Q4 is not a bad idea.
- 2** Finish creative early and **submit ads for review to Facebook, Google, etc.** long before you plan to run the ads. In 2018 the entire Facebook advertising platform went down over the holiday weekend and there are generally longer review periods either way, so having your ads approved in advance is a must.
- 3** When you set up your email marketing flows in a system like Klaviyo or something else, **test the email links and all aspects of the automated workflows** to make sure they function correctly.

# IT WORKED!!!! BUT NOW ALL THESE CUSTOMERS ARE KILLING US!

If feels great to drive a ton of sales over the holiday weekend and the weeks leading up to Christmas. But this increase in revenue can be a huge issue for customer service:



The onslaught of customer service from nervous customers waiting for their orders can be a **huge burden on your team**.



In addition, if you blow the customer experience you'll have **a lot of negative customer reviews** going into the new year.



Here are a few key things to get in place on the customer service side:



**Make sure your FAQ section is up to date** with the most common questions, and that you **update it frequently** throughout the holiday shopping season based on what people are asking.



The weeks before the holiday rush is a good time to **streamline your helpdesk workflow**. Any inefficiencies or hacks are going to be magnified significantly with the increase in volume over the holidays.



**Guide customers in order confirmation and other transactional emails** to the frequently asked questions section to get help quickly.



# 24/7 LIVE CHAT CAN BE A GAME CHANGER – AND WE CAN HELP

Apart from the basics above, using a 24/7 live chat team throughout the holiday season will maximize sales, make the customer experience awesome, and ensure your team internally does not burn out.



1

Visitors that chat convert 5 to 10 times higher than visitors that don't chat, so a 24/7 live chat team is going to pay for itself in spades.

2

Frantic customers with time sensitive questions can use the chat to get answers quickly. This not only drives more sales up front, but will also make the customer service experience seamless for them after purchasing.

3

With a huge spike in revenue for the holidays, you can divert much of your customer service tickets to the live chat team through links in your transactional emails and other calls to action throughout the buying and post purchase experience.

# HAVE A 24/7 LIVE CHAT TEAM ONLINE NEXT WEEK

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With HelpFlow's live chat team, our team of agents can be live 24/7 chatting with your website visitors. We can help throughout the entire year, but we have special plans for new clients that need our support during this busy season.



**Book a Strategy Call today to learn how we can make this the best holiday shopping season ever – or watch a video demo here.**

**Book A Strategy Call**

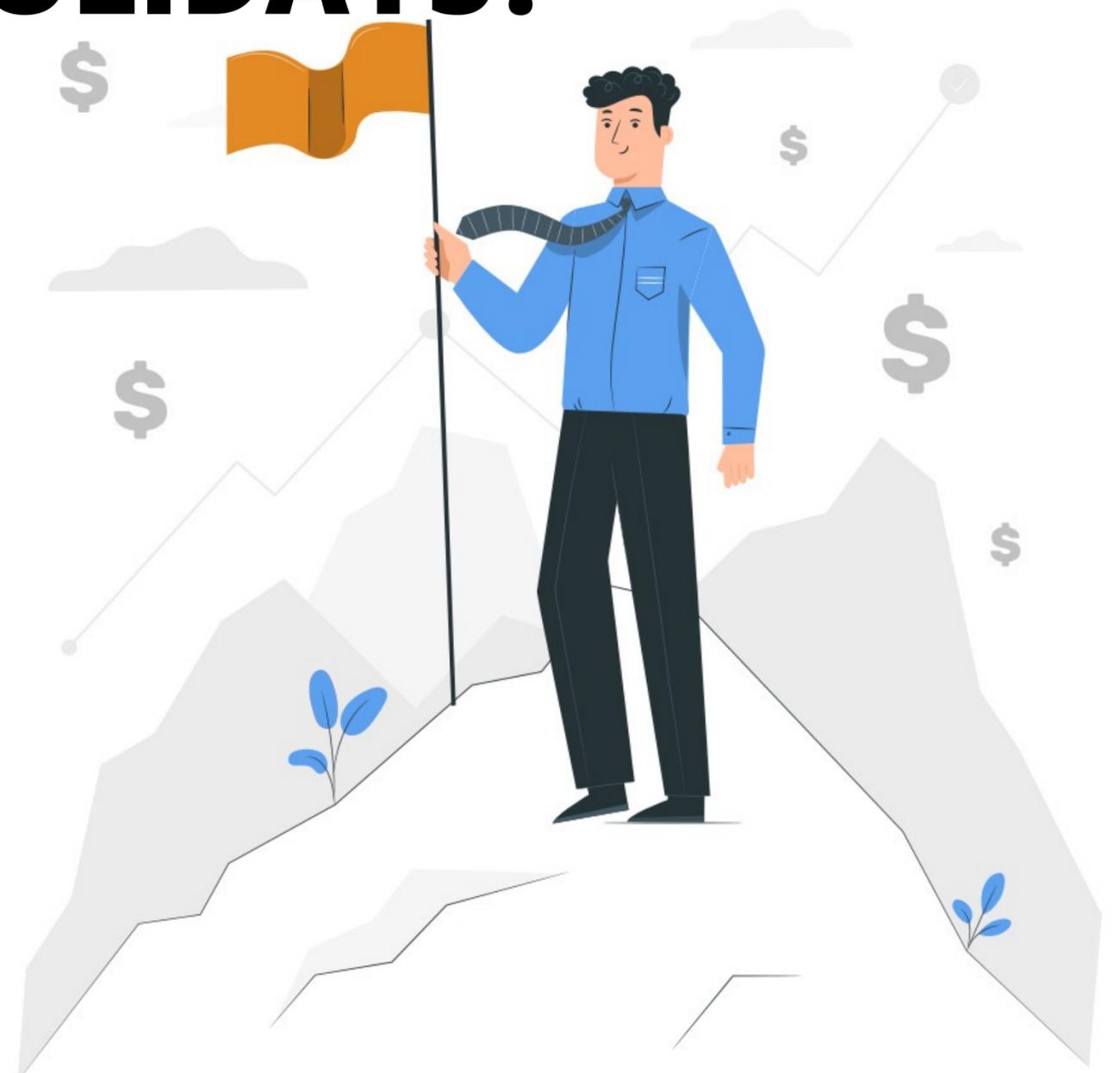
**Watch our Demo Video**



# ARE YOU READY FOR THE HOLIDAYS?

There's a lot to digest here, but the basics of the strategy are to build a warm audience of buyers early in the month, have a great offer that's healthy for your business, and to be methodical about promoting the offer throughout the holiday shopping weekend and the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Spend some time before the holidays getting everything ready so you can be toasting your family over Thanksgiving weekend while you watch the orders come in, rather than being stuck in the back room on your laptop putting out fires and seeing how much wasted money or missed opportunity is passing you by.



[Watch The Online Demo Video Here](#)

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# YOUR STORE NEEDS A 24/7 LIVE CHAT TEAM

HelpFlow provides 24/7 live chat teams to 100+ eCommerce stores. See how we can help you save checkout abandons, increase conversion rate, and ultimately drive more sales while providing an awesome customer experience.

[Book A Strategy Call](#)