



WHITEPAPER

HOW BRANDS SHOULD GET READY FOR BLACK FRIDAY 2022



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There are two words that can get people in marketing and social media's attention almost instantly, and they are 'Black Friday'. Before we get into why, it's important to establish exactly what the phenomenon is and where it came from.

WHO STARTED IT

Started in the US, Black Friday has always been the term for the Friday after Thanksgiving, which is considered in the United States as the day when the Christmas shopping season starts. Stores, which promote huge discounts and promotions on various goods, open earlier and stay open later in a bid to drive more custom. Some stores keep the deals going into Monday, known as Cyber Monday. Black Friday is the **busiest shopping day** of the year in the US.

THE UK'S HISTORY WITH BLACK FRIDAY

Surprisingly, the UK didn't officially start joining in until the 2010s, as originally Black Friday used to have an entirely different meaning for Brits. The term originates within the Police and NHS, referring to the Friday before Christmas, where celebrations start to ramp up and emergency services get busier with people drinking and partying too much and requiring medical assistance.

It was only until US companies operating in the UK, such as Amazon and Asda (owned by US chain Walmart), began to offer Black Friday style promotions in the **early 2010s** that UK shoppers jumped on the bandwagon. The Black Friday frenzy officially peaked in the UK in 2014, with most high street retailers taking part.

In 2021, UK shoppers spent over **£9bn** during the Black Friday weekend, up 23% from 2020. Much of this shopping was done online, with a **2021 survey** discovering that less than a quarter (22%) opted to shop in store.

This makes avenues such as digital/influencer marketing a must for brands. If people are already looking online for deals, why not put your brand right where they are scrolling?

BRANDS AND BLACK FRIDAY

Black Friday/Cyber Monday is a massive money-making opportunity not to be missed for e-commerce brands and stores. There's no better time to shout about products and services than on a day where the majority of the population is looking to splash the cash.

This means industries like PR, digital/traditional marketing, social media, and influencer, all get to join the fray, and the frenzy. It's important for brands to utilise this period as it can help widen demographic audiences, brand awareness and of course, should hopefully make them a good deal of money.

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INFLUENCER MARKETING AND BLACK FRIDAY

Influencers can play a key role in getting a brand's Black Friday deals noticed. While avenues like traditional PR can assist in getting a brand's name on a news site, the number of readers and amount of engagement is often much higher when influencers and social media are involved.

PR results are much harder to measure too, a publication might have 200k average monthly readers, but how many eyes have actually been on the piece you were featured in? With social and influencer, we can get the exact data as to who has seen and clicked on your brand.

This becomes especially important when trying to target a lower age audience - and since the biggest spenders in 2019 were Millennials, it's important for brands to be seen on the sites and socials they're looking at. Mobile phones are also where a lot of people do their purchasing. In 2021, Shopify had a **record Black Friday**, with sales of almost EUR2.9 billion around the world with data showing that 72% of these global sales were made via mobile.

It's no secret that influencers do what it says on the tin, they influence behaviour. They can wield significant swaying power and have the ability to convert someone from simply taking an interest in a brand, to becoming a paying customer. Imagine seeing your favourite social star talking about a cool product, that is also discounted! Using creators for Black Friday promotions has, for many brands, become a no brainer.

You only need to look at #BlackFriday2021 on Instagram and you'll see over 600,000 posts for that year alone. #BlackFriday attracted over 21,000,000 posts. It's amazing to see the social interaction that this one day generates. In a world where we're constantly trying to earn more and spend less, days like this are vital, especially this year as the UK heads into a potentially protracted recession.

It's important to ensure that the product/service being promoted really does align with that influencer. There needs to be, at the very least, some initial interest from their audience in what you are offering in order for them to click on that link and make a purchase.

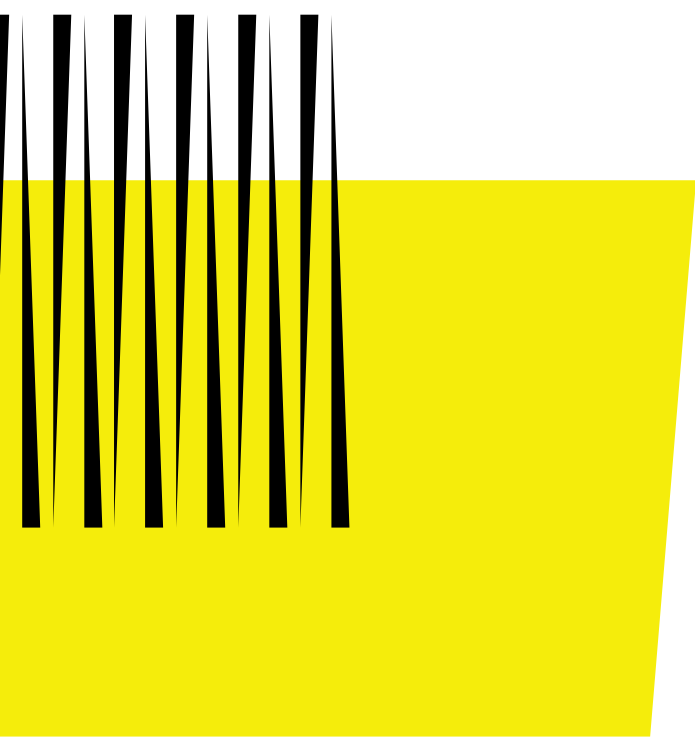


Grace Crawley is a talent agent for Pickle Agency, which have an impressive roster of digital talent that Disrupt have used on some successful campaigns. The agency has a huge focus on sustainability and sees some great partnerships that link this area and Black Friday. Grace said:

"AS AN AGENCY BASED ON SUSTAINABILITY, WE OFTEN ARE CAUTIOUS ABOUT BLACK FRIDAY PARTNERSHIPS BUT HAVE RECENTLY SEEN SOME GREAT SUSTAINABLY-BASED PROJECTS WHICH CAN BE INCLUSIVE OF ALL BUDGETS YET STILL CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENT."

So how far in advance should brands be approaching talent for these types of partnerships? Grace has some advice: "These usually are on our radar about a month prior to Black Friday and our creators plan their content in advance as the most successful BF partnerships come from organic posting, showcasing discounted second-hand clothes, makeup or jewellery whilst not hurting pockets too much.

"FOR US, THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF BLACK FRIDAY IS APPRECIATING GREAT DEALS ON HIGH QUALITY CLOTHING RATHER THAN THE BULK BUYING OF FAST FASHION, WHICH WE OFTEN SEE WHEN IT COMES TO BLACK FRIDAY CAMPAIGNS AND SALE PROMOTIONS."



It's true that more plant friendly and sustainable shopping has seen a huge uplift. In 2021, 73% of consumers said they wanted to be more sustainable. Just look at Love Island choosing to partner with eBay vs a fast fashion brand. It's encouraging to see that sustainable brands will take part in Black Friday, making them more accessible to lower income households too. Could this be the biggest Black Friday for eco-friendly brands? At Disrupt, we're hopeful that 2022 will see eco-brands and sustainability rise up everyone's Black Friday shopping list.

Beauty brands go hard on Black Friday, so influencer marketing is key here. Some of the biggest influencer names made their mark from promoting their favourite make-up items. Kavita, who goes by @shewearsfashion on Instagram, did a great Black Friday campaign for a huge brand. "I've done various jobs for Black Friday, one of my favourites was for Illamasqua who wanted me to talk about their discounts for Black Friday. Not only in terms of sales from a click through and ROI aspect, but to promote the offer to a wider audience to let them know the offers were there in the first place."

On what she gets asked to do by brands, she said: "A lot of the time I'll be asked to help for specific offers running on Black Friday, whether it's brands that are offering a box of goodies free for buying during Black Friday (NARS had an offer with their mascara a few years ago) or even incentives for influencers to talk about a company, such as making the % of commission on affiliate links being higher during that period (such as Amazon)."

She adds: "Most of the time they (partnerships) come in a couple of months before and are pretty open to what types of content they would like to be done, but reels absolutely perform the best for Black Friday offer content in my opinion!."

SOCIAL MEDIA SHOPPING

In the middle of 2021, social media giants TikTok launched their live shopping feature and since then, have seen massive success within the social shopping space. With an e-commerce team dedicated to onboarding new brands and agencies to get them involved, TikTok is showing no signs of slowing down when it comes to people having a social shopping spree. The way people can sell and shop on TikTok comes in three formats:

/ SHOPPABLE LIVE-STREAMING
/ E-COMMERCE SHORT-FORM VIDEO
/ PRODUCT SHOWCASE

Live-stream shopping has become hugely popular within the past year. On TikTok, a shopping live-stream usually lasts a minimum of 2 hours, with around 30-40 products shown. These products might be from a single brand or multiple within the same category.

TikTok creator 'itsnisrin' is one of the platform's most successful TikTok shop creators. After going viral with a video for beauty brand The Inkey List, where her involvement meant that a product completely sold out – she was enlisted by the brand to be a creator for live shopping.

For Black Friday 2021, Nisrin did a shopping live not just with the brand but Charlotte Tilbury herself! Speaking to TikTok Newsroom, Nisrin said: "I went to the Charlotte Tilbury headquarters and was able to do my LIVE in the studio alongside her which was an amazing experience and one that I will forever remember." She puts her success down to only working with brands and products that she genuinely loves. "My followers have a lot of trust in me, and I was able to encourage them passionately about all these items as they were firm favourites."

Another creator that has experienced major success with live shopping is unboxing content creator Luke, known as Lopwert on TikTok. Posting 18 videos in 1 week alone, his consistency has earned him over 440k followers and a constant spot on TikTok shop. You only have to search 'lopwert live' to see how often he goes live on TikTok, and at around 3 per week, this will earn him a pretty penny.

AMAZING AFFILIATES

TikTok is great for affiliate marketing and it's where a lot of TikTok shop creators make their money. TikTok will handle brands coming on board as shop partners, making it easy for brands to display their products in app.

An affiliate program is where a product/service is promoted in exchange for commission on each sale. With influencers, they will be given a trackable link for a product and if people purchase through that link, they will receive a percentage of the money made from the link clicks.

Brands should seriously consider affiliate marketing on TikTok given the scale of people using the app (1 billion daily) and even though the audience skews younger, TikTok was the top-grossing non-gaming app in 2021, with \$110 million of user spending.

Patrick Nommensen, Senior Director E-Commerce UK for TikTok said: "We have a huge range of merchants that have joined TikTok Shop in the UK across a variety of categories including electronics, beauty, fashion, jewellery and more. Beauty does particularly well, due to TikTok's heritage as a home for #beautyhacks and creative #makeuptransformations, and emerging beauty brands like Unicorn Cosmetics and Sunnamusk which featured in our recent Summer Sale event."



STEVIE JOHNSON

CREATIVE DIRECTOR



BLACK FRIDAY AND DIGITAL MARKETING

So, what are our top tips for making the most for your brand on Black Friday 2022?

Disrupt's managing director, Stevie Johnson, says it's about being prepared, finding the right influencer(s) and executing your plan.

He said:

"INFLUENCER MARKETING IS VERY FIRMLY A MULTI-MILLION POUND PART OF THE PERFORMANCE CHANNEL THESE DAYS, SO IT CAN'T BE AN AFTER-THOUGHT WHEN IT COMES TO BLACK FRIDAY. AS WITH ALL DIGITAL INVESTMENTS AROUND THIS CRUCIAL TRADING PERIOD, IT NEEDS TO DELIVER RETURNS.

WHEN PARTNERING WITH TALENT THAT CAN DRIVE AN AUDIENCE TO TAKE ACTION, YOU SHOULD BE PROVIDING TRACKABLE LINKS AS YOU WOULD FOR AN AFFILIATE, TO HELP DRIVE SALES. THIS IS AN AREA WHERE WE ARE SEEING MASSIVE SUCCESS ACROSS THE MOST RECENT SOCIAL PLATFORMS, SUCH AS TIKTOK FOR THEIR SHOP PARTNERS."

Here at Disrupt, we have the privilege of working alongside our sister agencies Found and Braidr. Found is an all-service digital marketing agency and Braidr is a technology company that focuses on data.

These two industries work hard during the Black Friday period - with the needs and wants of clients evolving, the team must be agile in knowing what to provide their clients.



Ruth O'Brien is Paid Social Lead at Found. She is the go-to for all things digital paid ads and is one of Disrupts key partners for influencer ads too. On Black Friday and how it impacts clients she says, "It can be the highest converting day of the year but CPMs (cost per mille) and CPCs (cost per click) also go sky high."

What are Ruth's tips and how does she prepare her clients for this?

"IMPLEMENTING LEAD GEN ADS EARLY TO FILL YOUR EMAIL LIST (AND REMARKETING LISTS) IS A GREAT WAY TO DRIVE HYPE FOR YOUR BLACK FRIDAY OFFER AT CHEAPER CPMS. WE'VE HAD GREAT SUCCESS THROUGH IMPLEMENTING 'SIGN UP FOR EARLY ACCESS/ EXTRA DISCOUNT' STYLE MESSAGING ON LEAD GEN CAMPAIGNS ON THE LEAD UP TO THE BIG DAY."

Planning is key too, she continues:

"It is also really important to plan ahead as much as possible. Paid social channels such as Meta are reliant on machine learning to optimise. Big changes to campaign budgets and targeting can lose efficiency. It's vital for brands to ensure creative is finalised early and campaigns are built to allow learning stages to pass quickly. It can be easy to overthink the creative.

Her top piece of advice?

"THIS IS NOT A TIME FOR 100 ADS WITH SEPARATE MESSAGING FOR BLACK FRIDAY, CYBER MONDAY, 2 HOURS LEFT ETC. STICK TO A CORE OF STRONG CREATIVE, GO FOR CONSISTENT MESSAGING THROUGHOUT THE WEEK AND REDUCE THE PERCENTAGE OF YOUR BUDGET USED ON LEARNING STAGES."

So, there's a good deal of money to be made - if your plan is executed correctly and this spans across all forms of marketing. Brands shouldn't dream up a million things for Black Friday just for the sake of it, which is why planning is so important - and why we're giving you a head up now!

If you're a brand, think about what you have to offer for this period. Is it worth shouting about? Would the investment in wider marketing for Black Friday position your brand as a leader in the space? Planning and strategy are key here and at Disrupt, Found and Braidr, we're always available for advice on the best move forward.

James Wolman is Head of Data Science at Braidr. Data is often the first step in knowing what your brand needs and can really help shape objectives. "For Braidr, Black Friday is all about learning as much as we can from history while at the same time accepting the fact that anything can happen."

Why do they do this? "We want to help clients anticipate how much customers are likely to spend and what they're most likely to buy, so they can confidently decide their budgets and merchandising strategies to cater to their customers' needs and expectations across Black Friday and the Golden Quarter."

He continues, "This might be in the form of sophisticated forecasting and customer segmentation or mining the social web to identify upcoming trends and purchase drivers. We also look at shopper confidence and global buying behaviours especially following the pandemic, to understand how that might affect sales."





JAMES WOLMAN

HEAD OF DATA SCIENCE

And the secret formula for success? Perhaps it's no surprise that James' top tip is to read and understanding your data:

"THE SECRET TO A SUCCESSFUL BLACK FRIDAY IS CUSTOMER UNDERSTANDING AND THAT COMES FROM THE DATA. THE ABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY TAILOR YOUR OFFERS TO CUSTOMERS IS WHAT REALLY TIPS THE SCALE ON A SUCCESSFUL BLACK FRIDAY STRATEGY."

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REFLECTING AND LOOKING AHEAD

While Black Friday isn't until November, it's clear that you need to begin planning now, if you're to execute your strategy successfully. As all of our experts in this report have stressed, strategy is key in having a successful Black Friday.

If you're a brand that is thinking about running some Black Friday marketing activity but aren't really sure where to start, get in touch. Contact us through our [website](#) or [socials](#). We are well connected at Disrupt; we're ready and waiting to share our expert knowledge with you.

