

SAVE UP TO
50%

**BLACK
FRIDAY**

Preparing your online store for Black Friday and Cyber Monday

Black Friday and Cyber Monday are firmly established worldwide as a significant sales period in the retail calendar. And this year, with COVID-19 restrictions in place, Black Friday will in no small degree change its focus to digital, blending even more with the Cyber Monday offers.

In this context, online retailers have an outstanding opportunity to cater to the needs of eager consumers. At the same time, competition for customers online is going to be fiercer than ever. Online retailers need to prepare for the event if they do not want to miss out on any sales.

With just a few weeks to go, here is some advice from the eCommerce experts at Optiseller to help you get your ducks in a row.

1. BUSINESS STRATEGY

Align your distribution, IT and customer service teams

In the context of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, inter-team alignment is more critical than ever. Everyone in the business should know exactly who does what in the process and be on the same page when it comes to the sales process and any contingency plans. Having your teams working in harmony will help the event go as smoothly as possible.

Train & hire temporary staff

With Q4 being the busiest online trading of the year, consider finding temporary staff well before you need them. Whether they are answering customers' messages or packaging and shipping the items you have sold, make sure they are trained up and ready to help you fulfil all the extra orders you expect.

Avoid launching on any further new marketplaces

At Optiseller, we never cease to be amazed by the number of online businesses that decide to launch in new marketplaces without due preparation. As with any launch, things can and will go wrong, with the added complication that the stakes are higher than ever during peak periods such as Black Friday and Cyber Monday time. If you do decide to go ahead, we strongly recommend that you engage the help of eCommerce professionals like ourselves.

2. STOCK MANAGEMENT

Research & source new stock well in advance

Use tools such as Terapeak to provide you with insight into how products and categories of products are performing on all eBay marketplaces. Terapeak gives an overview of what items are popular and will provide you with keyword research. You should also ensure you have adequate stock for any sales you are planning.

Get any new stock listed as soon as possible

The earlier you get your items listed, the better - your listings will have enough time to gain sales history and work their way up the best match ranking. If you have poor performing single listings, consider setting up new, freshly optimised colour or size variation listings. For example, a red jumper may help a black jumper sell and vice versa.

3. LISTINGS

Optimise your current listings

Now is the time to review your listings and make sure they are as attractive and compelling as possible. Are the titles descriptive enough, and do they include the keywords that buyers are using to find products like the ones you sell? How about the images, do they grab the buyer's attention? In a competitive marketplace, having clear, quality images of your products and detailed descriptions of their features and benefits can improve performance.

Pay particular attention to item specifics

Item specifics are particularly crucial on eBay, because they help users narrow down their choices using filters on search results. Listings with optimised item specifics are immediately more visible on eBay, because they do not fall through the listing cracks. Use our own Optiseller Aspect Finder + tool to automate the process - it's like SEO for eBay, and it will tell you exactly what you need to do to enhance each of your listings.

4. PRICING

Be competitive with pricing

Black Friday and Cyber Monday are big on discounts. Your buyers will be comparing your prices with the competition, so you must get your pricing right. Research the offering of your competitors and make sure you are still competitive; even if you were when you listed your items first, the price parity could have shifted. If you are on eBay, consider using eBay Strikethrough Pricing, which crosses out a previously listed price to show that an item is currently on sale. And, needless to say, put time aside to review your prices before peak trading - never during!

5. CUSTOMER SERVICE

Improve seller performance ratings

Seller performance is a crucial component of marketplace success. Working on your seller performance before peak trading can make a massive difference to your sales. If you sell on eBay and are currently rated as Above Standard, work hard to get to Top Rated. If you are Top Rated, consider getting your listings qualified for eBay Premium Service. As an eBay Premium Service seller, you can get a 10% discount on your eBay final value fees, which again can have a considerable impact on your bottom line.

Rethink your returns policy

Do not underestimate the importance of your return policy, particularly if your competitors sell products that are practically identical to yours. Consider extending your returns in preparation for Black Friday and Cyber Monday; longer return periods can increase your likelihood of generating further sales. Likewise, look at what your competitors are doing and adjust accordingly - do not give them any advantage.

6. SHIPPING

Review your delivery options

Review your delivery methods and try to obtain the Fast n' Free logo for that boost in 'best match' searches. Free shipping forms part of the eBay search algorithm, so it is hugely important to ensure your listings include it, especially during peak periods - it will help your store gain visibility during the busiest time of the year. Also consider giving your customers a choice of free shipping, next day delivery or stated day delivery.

Remember dispatch time

Many sellers overlook this one, so make sure you are not one of them. Dispatch time is how long it takes the seller to ship the sold item. Even at busy times like Black Friday and Cyber Monday, try to aim for same-day or 1 day maximum. Anything more, and customers will purchase from another seller. Buyers want to receive their items quickly! Remember, if you use Next Day Delivery guaranteed, you can extend your number of trading days considerably. If you use a third-party fulfilment provider, talk to them about your shipping options.

7. PROMOTIONS

Dial-up your promotional activity

Amazon, eBay and other sites boost their promotional activity vastly in the run-up to Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Most business sellers have access to submitting their listings to daily deals, so consider running special promotions. eBay also do voucher/sale events that they put a lot of marketing weight into. On eBay, you should also make use of the seller hub promotions, such as Order Discount, Multi-Buy and Sale Events.

Leverage promoted listings

If you are on eBay, you will also have at your disposal the possibility of running Promoted Listings. Promoted Listings are eBay's version of Amazon's PPC model. However, unlike Amazon, where you pay for clicks to your listing, eBay Promoted Listings use a 'pay when you sell' model, meaning that you are paying for conversions, not views.

During peak trade, you should absolutely give yourself as many levers as you can to generate further sales. As eCommerce experts, at Optiseller we know that if you put in practice some, or even better, all of the above, you will see a boost to your bottom line. So, what are you waiting for?

For more information on Optiseller's Aspect Finder plus, visit: [Black-Friday](#)

eBay sellers can get the tool for FREE for a limited time only, so try it today!