

CHECKLIST · FREE RESOURCE

# BLACK FRIDAY ADS CHECKLIST

*What to set up in Meta and Google Ads before, during and after Black Friday 2026 (27 November) so the busiest week does not become the most expensive one*

# Q4 and Black Friday ads checklist

Black Friday is the week ad costs climb the most. Every brand bids on the same people at the same time, so the stores that win are rarely the ones with the biggest budgets. They are the ones that warmed up their audiences in October, fixed their tracking before the traffic arrived and had the creative ready before the week began.

This is the list we work through with our e-commerce clients from late October to early December. It covers Meta and Google Ads, but most of it applies to any paid channel. Black Friday 2026 falls on Friday 27 November and Cyber Monday on 30 November.

Numbers in here come from our own accounts and are illustrative. Your margins and market will differ. The order of work will not.

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# Six weeks out: the foundation

Mid-October. Anything technical you fix now is cheap; in Black Friday week it is expensive.

- ☐ **Purchase tracking is verified end to end**
  - Place a real test order. Check it appears once (not twice) in Meta Events Manager, in Google Ads conversions and in GA4, with the right value.
- ☐ **The Conversions API is running next to the pixel**
  - Browsers block more tracking every year. Without server-side events Meta optimises on part of the data, exactly when it matters most.
- ☐ **You know your break-even ROAS for the discounted prices**
  - A 30 % discount can cut your margin in half. Recalculate: 1 divided by the margin after discount. Your normal ROAS target is wrong for this week.
- ☐ **The product feed is clean**
  - Correct prices, stock levels, GTINs and sale\_price fields in the Google Merchant Center and Meta catalogue. Disapproved products in November cost you sales you will not get back.
- ☐ **Site speed and checkout are tested on mobile**
  - Most Black Friday traffic is on phones. Run the checkout on a real phone over 4G. Remove anything that slows payment.

# Four weeks out: build the audiences

The cheapest Black Friday customer is the one who already knows you.

- ☐ **Warm-up campaigns are running**
  - Spend 15 to 25 % of the November budget in late October on content, video and best-sellers at normal prices. This fills the retargeting pools you will sell to later.
- ☐ **The email and SMS list is growing**
  - Run an early access or waitlist offer: sign up to get the deal first. A subscriber costs a fraction of a Black Friday click.
- ☐ **Retargeting audiences are ready**
  - Website visitors (30 and 180 days), add-to-cart without purchase, video viewers, Instagram and Facebook engagers, past customers. Build them now so they are populated.
- ☐ **Customer lists are uploaded**
  - Upload past buyers to Meta and Google (Customer Match). Use them for exclusions in prospecting and for a dedicated returning-customer offer.

# Two weeks out: offer and creative

Decide the offer once. Changing it mid-week resets the learning.

- ☐ **One clear offer, written in one line**
  - "30 % off everything" beats a mix of tiered codes. If people need to calculate, they leave.
- ☐ **At least four creative concepts are ready, in 1:1, 4:5 and 9:16**
  - Different angles, not different colours: the offer, the best-seller, the gift angle and a customer review or demo. Upload them before the week starts so they pass review.
- ☐ **The landing page matches the ad**
  - Same offer, same visual, same wording above the fold. A mismatch between ad and page is the most expensive mistake of the week.
- ☐ **Ads are scheduled and approved in advance**
  - Meta and Google review times grow during peak weeks. Submit ads at least three days before launch, set to start on the right day.
- ☐ **Promotions are set up in Google Merchant Center**
  - Promotions show a sale badge on Shopping ads at no extra cost. Submit them early; approval can take days.

# Black Friday week: running it

Change less than you want to. Watch more than you normally do.

- ☐ **Budgets go up on proven campaigns, not on new ones**
  - Raise budgets on campaigns that already convert. New campaigns launched mid-week spend in the learning phase at peak prices.
- ☐ **Google Ads seasonality adjustment is set for the sale days**
  - If you use Smart Bidding, a seasonality adjustment tells it to expect a higher conversion rate for a few days, so it bids up confidently.
- ☐ **Daily check: spend, ROAS against the discounted break-even, stock**
  - Pause ads for products that sell out. Nothing burns money faster than ads for an empty shelf.
- ☐ **Retargeting carries the urgency**
  - Prospecting finds people; retargeting closes them. "Ends Monday" works on someone who already viewed the product, not on a stranger.
- ☐ **Someone is watching comments and messages**
  - Ad comments are public customer service. An unanswered delivery question under an ad lowers its performance and its trust.

# After Cyber Monday: keep the value

December is where Black Friday pays back.

- ☐ **Budgets come down gradually, not to zero overnight**
  - Drop spend by 20 to 30 % a day. A sudden stop throws campaigns back into learning for the Christmas push.
- ☐ **New buyers get a second-purchase flow**
  - A thank-you email, a how-to, then a relevant product two to three weeks later. Most Black Friday buyers never come back unless you ask.
- ☐ **Christmas shipping deadlines are in the ads**
  - "Order by 18 December for delivery before Christmas" is the strongest message of early December.
- ☐ **You write down what happened**
  - Spend, revenue, ROAS, cost per new customer, best creative, what broke. Next year's checklist starts from this page.

## The short version

Fix tracking and the feed in October. Warm up audiences and grow the list four weeks out. One clear offer, four creative concepts, ads approved before the week. During the week raise budgets on what already works and change as little as possible. After it, bring budgets down slowly and turn new buyers into repeat buyers.

If you would rather hand the season over, we run Meta and Google Ads for e-commerce brands across Europe. Book a free 30 minutes at [mintagency.eu/contact](https://mintagency.eu/contact) and we will look at your account and your Q4 plan together.

**Book a free 30 minutes**

Written by Sarah Johanna Ferara and the Maison Mint team, Tallinn. Figures marked as our own data come from client accounts we manage and are illustrative. Free to share; please link to [mintagency.eu/resources](https://mintagency.eu/resources) when you do. © Mintagency OÜ 2026.