

SA supermarkets prepped and primed for Black Friday

 By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

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Black Friday has developed into a firm fixture on the South African retail calendar, with a growing number of retailers taking part in the sales event each year since it was piloted locally by Takealot in 2012. Supermarkets form a key part of this mix, never failing to draw crowds of Black Friday shoppers in search of deals on everyday essentials.



Image credit: Checkers

Checkers was the first local food retailer to participate in Black Friday back in 2014, and along with Shoprite will again be offering discounts on various grocery and household essentials.

According to the Shoprite Group, last year Shoprite, Checkers and Checkers Hyper stores served 125 customers per second on Black Friday.

Some of the deals offered in 2018 included a 50% saving on OMO washing powder and 40% off items such as Jacobs instant coffee, Weetbix and Ultramel custard. Shoprite and Checkers sold enough Jacobs instant coffee to make 7.7 million cups of coffee and enough Ultramel custard to make trifle for more than two million people.



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Among Pick n Pay shoppers, pantry items proved to be the most popular in 2018, closely followed by televisions and beer. Bakers original Tennis biscuits were also a favourite, with Pick n Pay selling enough to make roughly 1,640,000 peppermint crisp tarts.

"Many customers used Black Friday deals as an opportunity to refill their pantries, especially ahead of the Christmas period. Popular items included long-life milk, sugar, coffee, rice washing power and toilet paper," says John Bradshaw, retail executive: marketing at Pick n Pay.

"Customers have two priorities on Black Friday: they want to stock up on basic food items, but they also want to spoil themselves."

Planning for the day

Bradshaw says that to deliver a successful Black Friday shopping experience, Pick n Pay begins planning for the following year's event immediately after Black Friday ends. The grocery retailer is increasing its staffing complement in stores to manage deliveries, assist customers on the floor, and ensure that every till point is open to minimise queue times.

"We've been working with our suppliers for months now to ensure all stores and online have the right stock available, at the right prices, in the right quantities," says Bradshaw.

Pick n Pay also performed a Black Friday Trial Run at the end of September to test its systems and supply chain delivery.



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For Checkers and Shoprite, extensive Black Friday planning commences at least 6 months in advance. "We have been hard at work to secure the best deals and to ensure all our stores are sufficiently stocked," says Willie Peters, general manager: marketing at Shoprite and Checkers.

With over 1,000 Shoprite, Checkers and Checkers Hyper stores across South Africa, the retail giant has promised to be sufficiently staffed and offer extended Black Friday trading hours to ensure a satisfying shopping experience for its customers.

"We look forward to making this year's Black Friday our biggest yet. Considering the pressure many households are under given the current economic environment, we have worked closely with our suppliers to identify discounts that will provide meaningful savings and value to all," Peters adds.

Black November

Pick n Pay says its online shop team and technology systems have been bolstered to manage Black Friday online orders as many customers turn to online shopping for convenience.

Following on from its popularity last year, Pick n Pay is again running weekly exclusive Black November 'teaser' deals for its online customers across Gauteng and the Western Cape in the lead up to Black Friday on 29 November. According to Bradshaw, Pick n Pay's website experienced high levels of traffic during November 2018.

These 'Black November' deals offer up to 50% off across various categories including groceries, appliances, electronics, wine and liquor, household items and baby essentials. They go live on Pick n Pay's online shop every Monday at 7am and are valid for seven days or until stocks last.



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In addition to enhancing the online shopping experience to make it easier for customers to find the deals they are after, Pick n Pay's online delivery capacity has been ramped up, with "Black November saver delivery" slots introduced at a discounted rate.

"Many customers signed up for our Black Friday emailer ahead of the time and logged onto the website minutes before new deals launched. Customers really enjoyed the opportunity to shop for different products throughout the month and not just on one day," says Bradshaw.

ABOUT LAUREN HARTZENBERG

Managing editor and retail editor at Bizcommunity.com Cape Town apologist. Dog mom. Get in touch: lauren@bizcommunity.com

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