

Green Monday: the next retail shopping event to plan for

Black Friday, Cyber Monday and now Green Monday. Retailers would be forgiven for becoming a little breathless with all the shopping events that fall just weeks before the traditional rush of the festive season. But, with some timely action, these shopping holidays can offer local online retailers an opportunity to build the foundations for a profitable 2021.



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“Black Friday and Cyber Monday were already causing anxiety for online retailers, many of whom worry that the two events could cannibalise their festive season revenue. But we see all of this fourth-quarter activity as a real opportunity. The world is showing us the power of digital commerce and we believe South African brands can use the trends and insights coming out of global markets and apply them to their own offerings,” says Brendon Williamson, chief sales officer at DPO South Africa.

Digital shopping events

In addition to Black Friday and Cyber Monday, e-commerce analysts are now also tracking two additional events.

The Chinese shopping holiday, Singles' Day, which takes place on 11 November each year, topped \$74bn in sales this year as the Red Dragon pulled out of its Covid-19 doldrums. Celebrating singles, the Chinese answer to Valentine's Day sees online sales exceed those of Black Friday and Cyber Monday combined.

Results of this year's Singles Day reflect a Chinese economy that is back to pre-pandemic levels with e-commerce growing 17% year-on-year. Encouraging news for retailers around the globe.

While customers outside of China are only just beginning to participate in Singles' Day the second event analysts are tracking, and which is certainly of interest to South African consumers, is Green Monday.

Falling on the second Monday in December, Green Monday is one of the most profitable digital trading days of the year. US trading platform, eBay, first noticed the spike in 2007 and, after some research, realised it was the last day shoppers could buy gifts and be certain they would be delivered in time for Christmas. Many retailers now build specific campaigns for the day, appealing to customers' last-minute panic buying.

"The same logistics logic applies in South Africa and we see the last-minute shopping rush trend as one our retailers can really capitalise on with just a bit of forethought. Having said that, we are aware that the prospect of formulating plans for all of these shopping events may be overwhelming for retailers, the good news is that with some solid planning it is possible to not only reap revenue rewards, but lay the groundwork for much of the year ahead," Williamson reassures.



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Navigating the fourth quarter

Williamson outlines seven points to help retailers navigate the frenetic fourth quarter:

1. Offer meaningful discounts

It sounds obvious, but some retailers begrudge discounting their products and services. It's important to remember you will be competing with hundreds of thousands of other stores, all of whom are slashing prices to capture a limited, pandemic-ravaged, disposable income. The first order of business is to make sure you have something compelling to offer.

2. Get the word out

People need to know about your fabulous sale. It's important to have campaigns that find your customers on the platforms they frequent. Using mailers with personalised messaging tailored to the various types of customers is key. Creating a specialised offer for first-time customers; frequent shoppers, those who haven't ordered in a while, and those who have shown previous interest but haven't made a purchase, all present opportunities.

Also, re-engaging Black Friday customers with retargeting advertisements via Google display or search ads, e-mail, and social media like Facebook and Twitter to draw them back to your shop is a good tactic.

3. Build your brand

The November shopping days act as excellent branding opportunities. Converting ad spend is a good end-goal, but by running promotions and getting them seen on as many media platforms as possible means your brand becomes more visible. You can also use the opportunity to create a strong brand connection like offering a free gift with a customer's first purchase, or use discounts as a way to get traffic onto your website and then activate a long-term retention strategy.

4. Focus on what shoppers really need

Creating value is more than just the satisfaction of saving a buck. Having a holiday e-commerce strategy driven by price alone will not necessarily secure you repeat customers. It's important to find new ways of creating perceived value for your clients. Flexible payment plans for big-ticket items, and free shipping are ways to let your shoppers know you value their

support.

5. Make it easy to find the Pay button

One of the best ways to increase your opportunity is to ensure your website is mobile-friendly. Many a deal will be done while people have a spare ten minutes to browse their phones. Make sure your customer journey is seamless, no matter what device shoppers may be using.

Payment methods are also very important. People who can't pay in the way they are most comfortable are likely to abandon their shopping cart. It's especially important, this year, to have Instant EFT options like SiD Secure EFT for those who are nervous or first-time online shoppers.



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6. Track, measure, shift

It's good to have a plan, but it's important to be flexible. If campaigns aren't working, change them. The best way to ensure you stay on top of things is to closely track and measure your efforts. Google Analytics, and now the more powerful Google Analytics 4 (GA4) offer powerful (and free) measurement tools to keep track of your efforts as well as user behaviour on your website and app (if you have one).

Shift elements of your campaign if you need and be prepared to stay agile throughout the sale season.

7. Information is currency

More than just guiding shoppers to the checkout page, these sale days offer companies the chance to gather information on their current and potential customers. Tracking user behaviour and gathering user information means you have an invaluable database that can be used to build your 2021 campaigns.

Retailers should also remember the festive season opportunity doesn't end on 25 December. Many savvy shoppers wait for the stock clearance sales and you have another chance to convert interest into income.

Finally, we know all these sale days can feel overwhelming. We are advising our DPO Store members to see them as a chance to watch the trends, apply the learnings, and lay the foundations for 2021. This is a challenging time for sure, but it is also an opportunity for retailers to really stand out and become a trusted and valued brand in a market that is quickly becoming more digitally sophisticated.

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