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THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

Black Friday 2019 Marketing Prep

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Why a Dedicated Black Friday Marketing Strategy Is Important

In 2018, Black Friday counted a record $6.22 billion in online sales.

Showing no signs of slowing, Black Friday shopping grows by 20-30% every year. Black Friday and Cyber Monday shoppers purchase more often and spend more with each year. While Black Friday has always been a must-have event for online retailers, competition is growing with the sales potential.

Promotional noise appears as a side effect of this shopping rush. Merchants send multiple promotional messages promising the best discounts and offers ever. So it's a big challenge for merchants to stand out and be noticed by shoppers among the noise in the market.

A unique approach and a highly-targeted set of activities should be employed to win your customers' attention and make the best out of Black Friday 2019.

The upcoming holiday season is expected to exceed prior years' performance. If you want to grab your piece of holiday pie, you need to take the shopping weekend seriously and start working on your Black Friday marketing strategy right now, if you haven't already started.

This year Black Friday and Cyber Monday land on November 29 and December 2. In this guide, we'll give you the best tips we have for getting your online store and marketing strategy optimized for Black Friday, so you can focus on dealing with the extra traffic and orders from your customers.

"

The best strategy you can have for your Black Friday marketing campaign is to be prepared. It might seem simple, but it's true!

Richard Lazazzera
A Better Lemonade Stand
@RichardABLS

01

Prepare Your Ecommerce Facilities For Black Friday

The absolute last thing you want during Black Friday is technical and UX issues. Especially at such a critical time when competition is at its highest.

A lot of homework has to be done before the holiday sales. Starting from a technical website performance review and installing cross-selling plugins, ending with reorganizing categories and launching new signup forms.

1.1. Review Technical Readiness

While waiting for a load of customers, make sure your website infrastructure works properly:

- Run tests for servers' load capacity.

- Double-check your site's mobile version, especially the checkout process

- Check if everything is fine with your site's security, etc.

Your online store's technical side should be sound and shiny because you don't want to lose customers just because your site was too slow, or the checkout button was invisible on your mobile version.

This tip shouldn't shock you. In the ecommerce world, faster is better. This is especially true for the biggest holiday of the year.

A slow site can be a killer, even more so with so much other competition out there. A speed audit for your site on both PC and mobile is an absolute must for your Black Friday prep checklist.

Why does this fall on the marketing checklist? Because you can have the best marketing strategy in the world, but if your site doesn't load properly, it doesn't really matter.

There are two different tools you can use for this. Google PageSpeed Insights is a great tool because it shows you your speed score for both mobile and desktop. Scrolling down will also show you different things you can do to further optimize your site's speed.

Another great tool is Pingdom, which is interesting because it will allow you to test your site speed from different countries. This is especially useful for ecommerce stores that do cross-border sales.

Read more about what to test before the holidays here.

1.2. Prepare Your Store For Quick Browsing

What you can definitely do before the holiday season is to create a "best Christmas gifts" category in your store. Include the products that were the most popular during last year's holiday season and those that could work as gifts for Christmas. Such categories in online stores save a lot of time for the vast majority of shoppers. People visit those categories a lot because they speed up shopping.

Having this category on your store will enable you to send gift-oriented newsletters during Black Friday and the upcoming holiday season. These are a few ideas to try out:

- **#A.** Build your holiday newsletter with the main call-to-action linking to your holiday collection. Along with your Christmas / Black Friday Bestsellers collection, you may also highlight the products that were the most popular last year or those that are trending right now.

- **#B.** Highlight the different categories of recipients of your gifts: moms, dads, teenage girls, young hipsters, etc. Link them directly to these categories in your store. Look how Gifts.com has done it in their store.
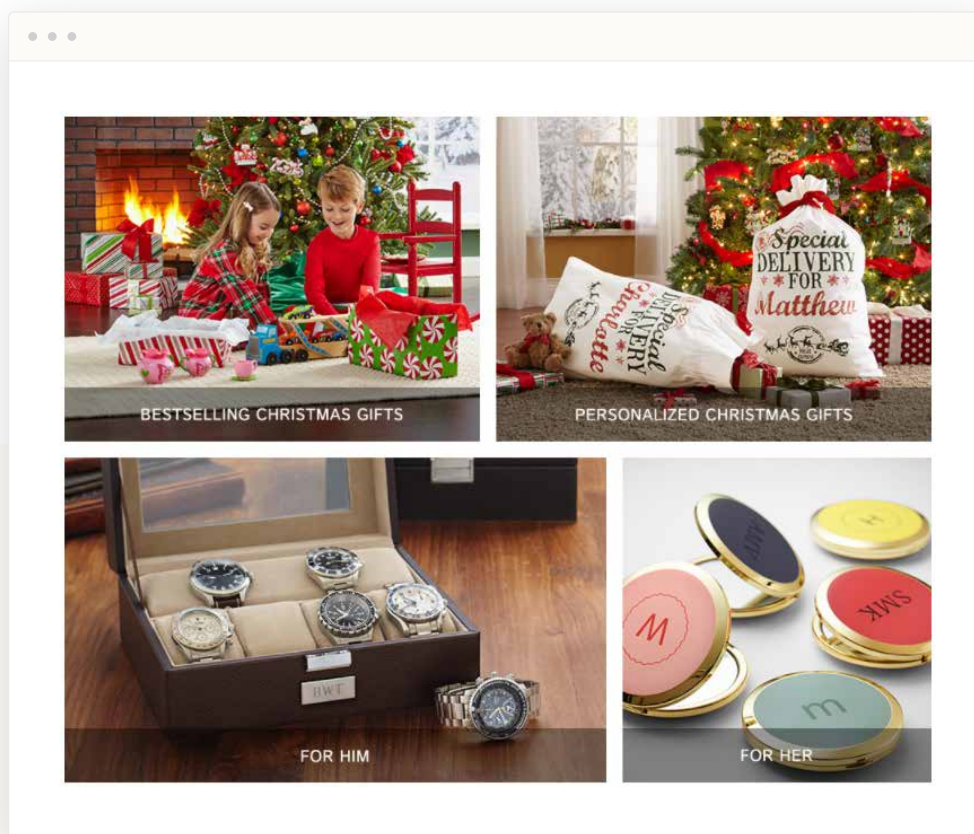
1.3. Make Your Return Policy More Visible

UPS claims that 68% of customers check a website's return policy before making a purchase.

If you expect to flood your website with visitors, make sure that information about returns is visible and the return process itself is easy.

Consider using a banner or a line at the top of the website with information about returns. This will increase your conversion and a number of successful checkouts.

Return policy information: mobile app view
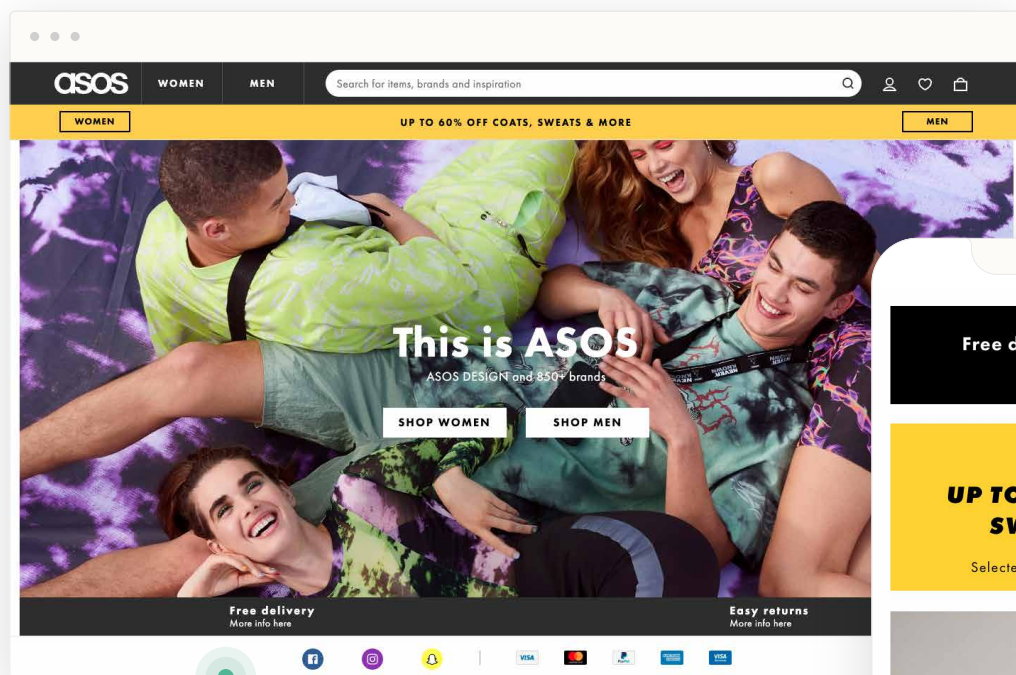
Return policy information: website view
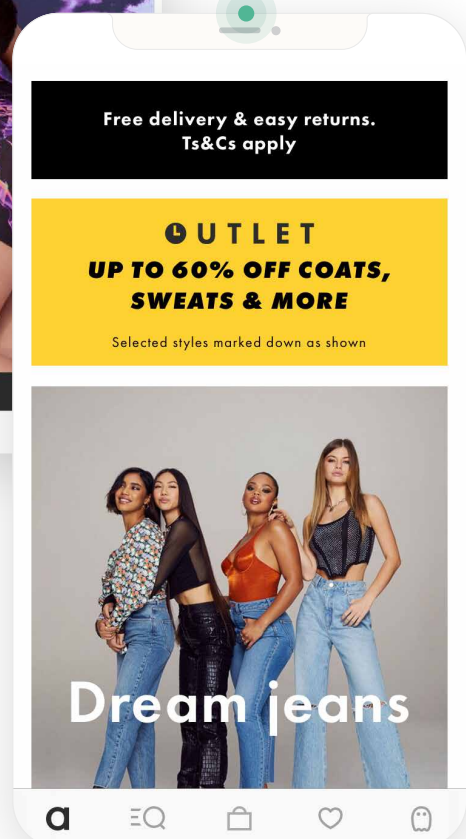
1.4. Boost Your Subscriber List

Even during the BFCM rush, your email marketing channel will generate a big part of your overall revenue. So you should pay some decent attention to growing and updating your contact list beforehand.

Consider launching new interactive signup forms. Mentioning BFCM deals and member-exclusive offers can help you boost your signups and get new leads for holiday campaigns.

Place a banner at the top of your homepage or on your most popular pages showing off your promotions. You should also note that some of your special deals will only be available to subscribers.

For future segmentation, add additional fields for your signup forms. For example, your state, gender, shoe size, favorite color, etc. – the most relevant data for your business.

Don't ask for too much information, but signup form with up to three fields is totally fine.

You can also create a special landing page to grab visitors' emails from, for example, your advertising campaigns. That way, you don't have to adapt your entire shop.

Just create a landing page that will direct your visitors towards desired outcomes.

Lastly, if you haven't already done so, you should invest in advertising campaigns. The most popular may be Facebook Ads.

This will make you competitive and help you stand out, especially if you start your promotions earlier.

Sign up form example
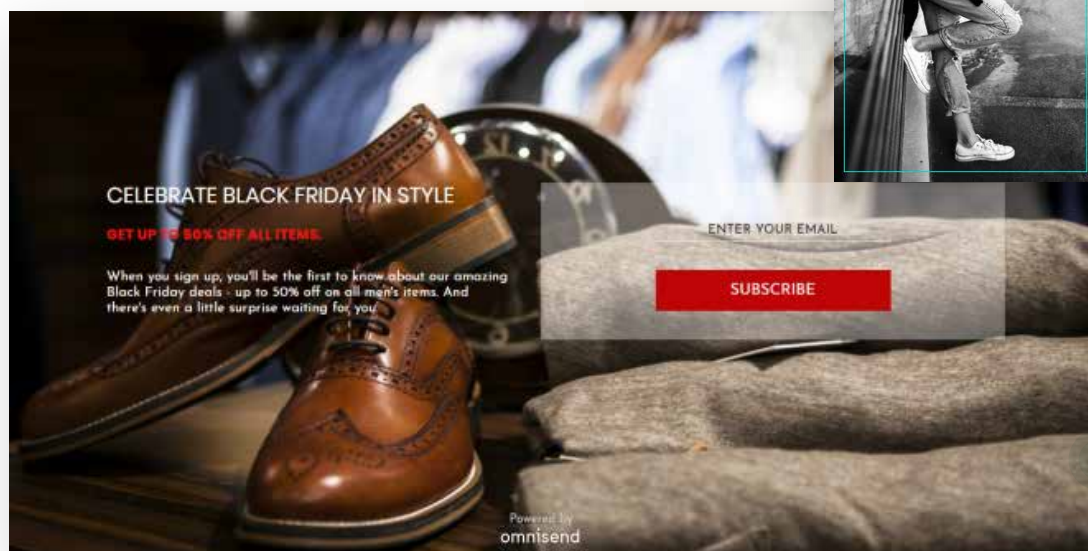
SIGN UP &
GET UP TO 50% OFF ON OUR
BLACK FRIDAY DEALS!

ENTER YOUR EMAIL

PHONE NUMBER

COUNTRY▾ | +XXX | XXXXXXX

ENTER YOUR NAME

SUBSCRIBE

CELEBRATE BLACK FRIDAY IN STYLE

GET UP TO 50% OFF ALL ITEMS.

When you sign up, you'll be the first to know about our amazing Black Friday deals - up to 50% off on all men's items. And there's even a little surprise waiting for you.

ENTER YOUR EMAIL

SUBSCRIBE

Powered by
omnisend

Landing page example

02

Create Critical Automated Workflows

Perhaps you already know that only 2-3% of first-time visitors to your store will end up with purchases. Meanwhile, others will browse and click the exit button without buying anything.

If you plan to invest in flooding your store with new visitors, you should definitely make the best out of it. New signups and even abandoned carts can mean a lot if you have a proper marketing automation setup.

The good thing is that you can prepare automated workflows in advance and they will start making you money when the time comes.

2.1. Onboard And Convert Your New Subscribers With Welcome Series

Even if your new visitor didn't buy anything but left his / her email, it's your win. Automated welcome emails are highly effective in many ways, especially in converting subscribers into customers.

With this kind of email, you can expect a 15% click rate and a 2.24% order rate.

The welcome email workflow works even better if you send a sequence of three emails in a row.

See an example of the workflow below:
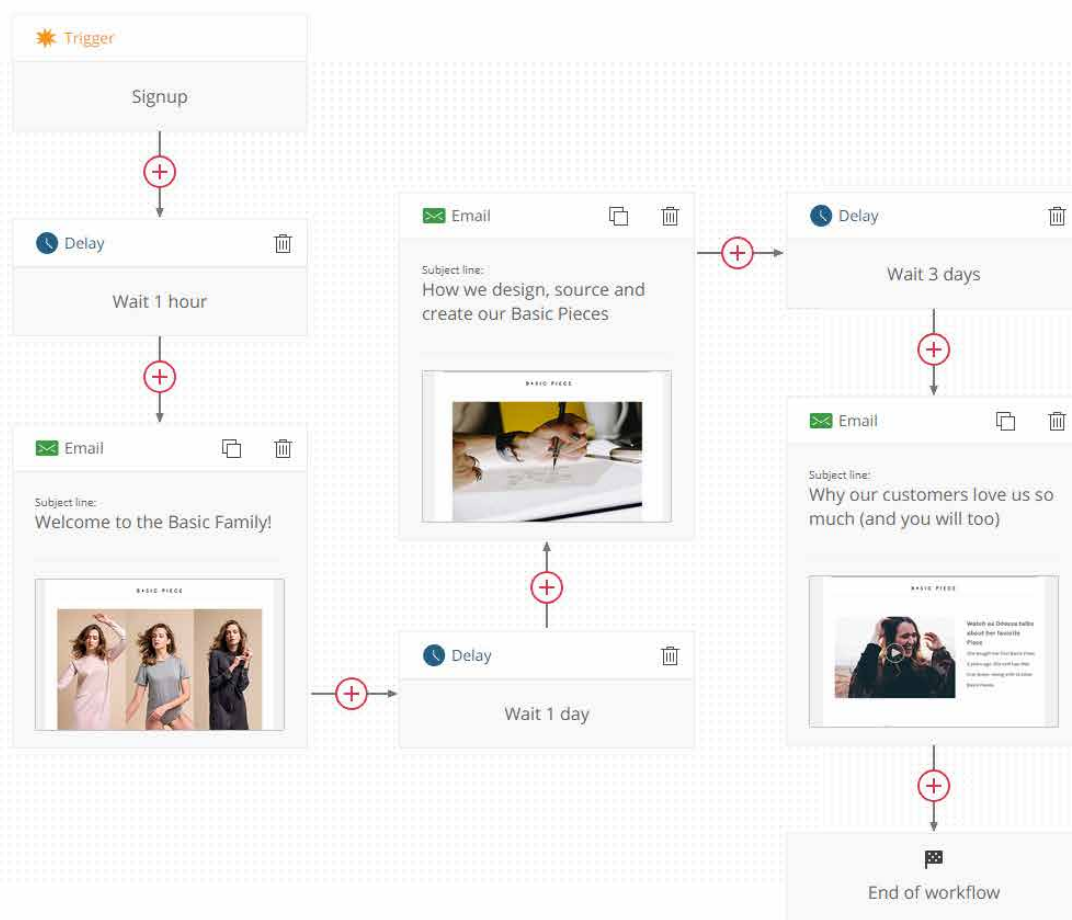
A lot of merchants include a 10% discount for the first purchase. You can do this, or you can be more creative and offer a bundle discount for acquiring two, three and more products from your store. However, incentives help break the ice and convert subscribers into buyers.

2.2. Win Back Your Abandoned Carts

There will be SO many abandoned carts during the BFCM weekend that it could be discouraging for you.

On average, only 3 out of 10 carts get purchased, according to data. So needless to say, the number of lost opportunities is significant.

Cart abandonment statistics

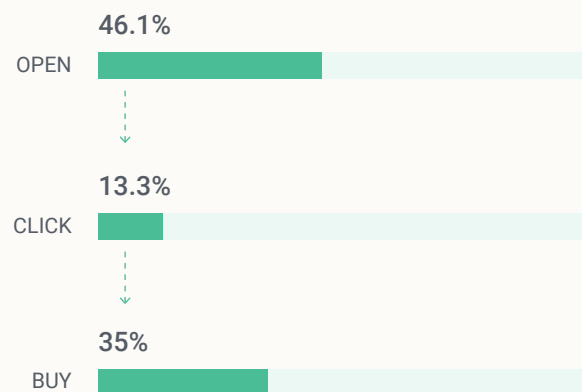Cart abandonment is different for mobile devices and desktop

46.1% of people open cart abandonment emails, **13.3%** click inside the email, and of those clicks, more than **35%** end up buying something.

85.7%
abandonment for mobile

73.1%
abandonment for desktop

46.1%
OPEN

13.3%
CLICK

35%
BUY

Unexpected costs and indecisiveness are the main reasons why people abandon their shopping carts. And here are several ideas on how you can address these issues and get your customers back to the checkout page.

2.2.1. An Advanced Idea To Win Abandoned Carts

To win back the customers that abandon your cart, you have to automate this process. So you need to launch an automated workflow that will be triggered when someone abandons a cart in your store.

There are many different options for what channels you can use for this.

The first idea is using a combination of a push notifi- cations, email, and Facebook retargeting. Let's take a closer look at how those channels and messages would complement each other.

So 15 minutes after your visitor abandons their cart, send them a push notification with a reminder to come back and complete their purchase. It might be that they are browsing for the same or alternative products in different stores and it's great that you can pop onto their screen at the right moment to remind about yours.

If this doesn't work out, send them an email with a reminder. Include all the necessary information, the absence of which could stop people from buying from you:

- Photos of the products left behind.
- A link to your return policy.
- Shipping policies and timeframes.
- Contact information, support channels.

Maybe that's the time to offer free shipping if you haven't before.

Only if those two channels don't convince your visitors to go back and make a purchase do you launch Facebook retargeting. This channel is more expensive but helps to keep your brand at the top of your audience's minds.
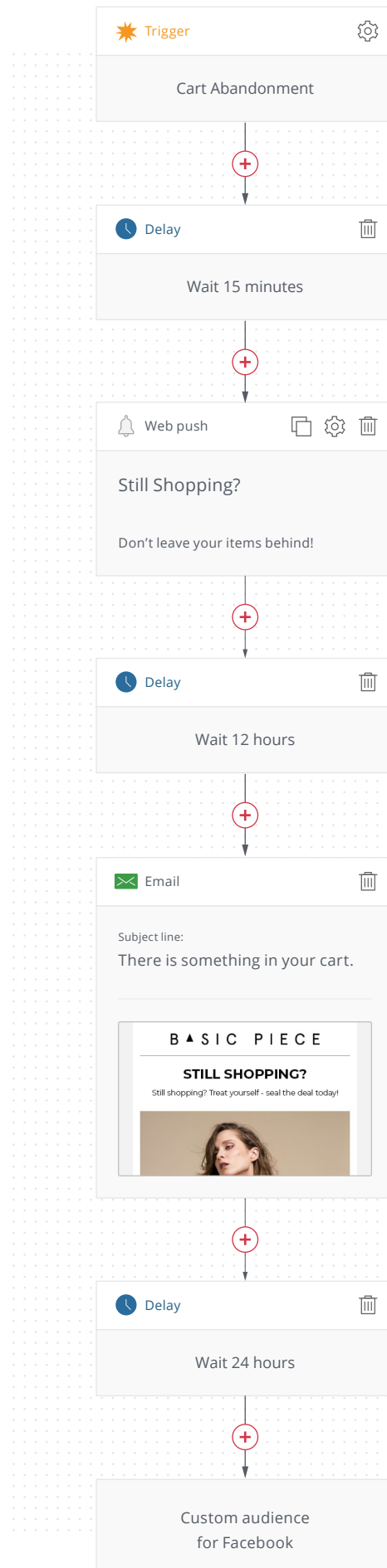
2.2.2. An Easy Idea To Win Back Abandoned Carts

If you don't feel confident in automating messages, or using omnichannel resources is still pricey for you, you shouldn't miss the opportunity to win back your carts anyway. Just stick to a simple sequence of three abandoned cart emails.

Sometimes tools that provide email services already have pre-defined automated workflows with text in place, so you don't

have to strategize or write copy by yourself. You launch the workflow once and it works for you 24/7.

See the example of a predefined email sequence at Omnisend. Hundreds of customers send this kind of email without any extra adjustment.
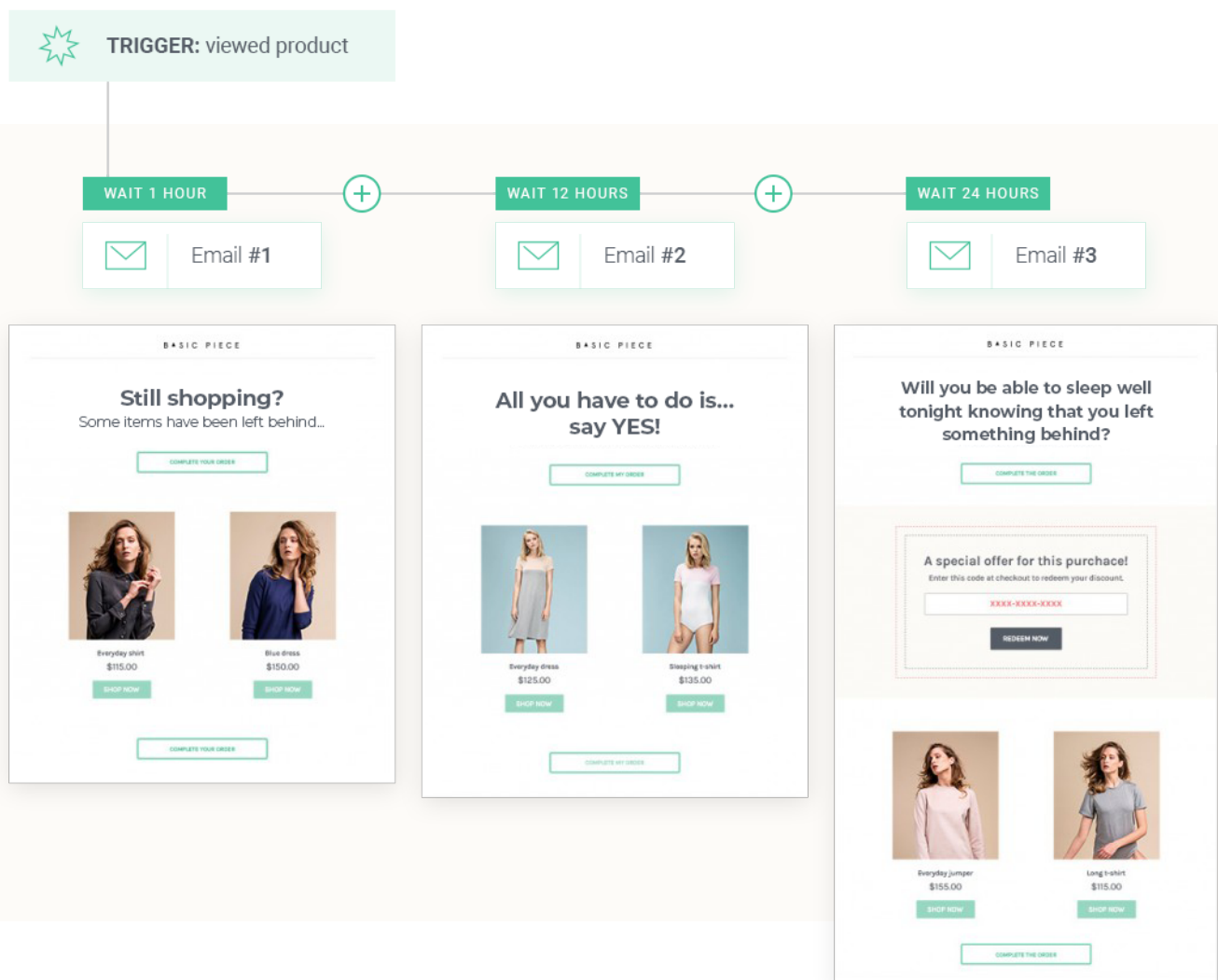
2.3. Take Care Of Your Customers After The BFCM Weekend

The holiday buzz comes and goes, but the customers you've acquired stay. What you should do with them afterwards, as suggested by Omnisend CEO, Rytis Lauris:

"My biggest Black Friday prep tip for online merchants looking to prepare is to not forget about the steps of the customer journey that come after acquisition. Yes, bring them in with doorbuster sales. Yes, give them an offer they can't refuse. Yes, focus on acquisition like you should during Black Friday.

But make sure you follow up with that customer after Black Friday is over. Don't just let them churn and sail off into the distance, instead, provide a customer experience they won't forget, and transform them into lifelong customers.

Set up automation workflows that, yes, secure that initial purchase, but bring them back once the holidays are over by using all of your channels to send relevant messages. Black Friday doesn't have to be a bunch of one-shot customers. You can increase your customer base significantly with the right strategies in place."
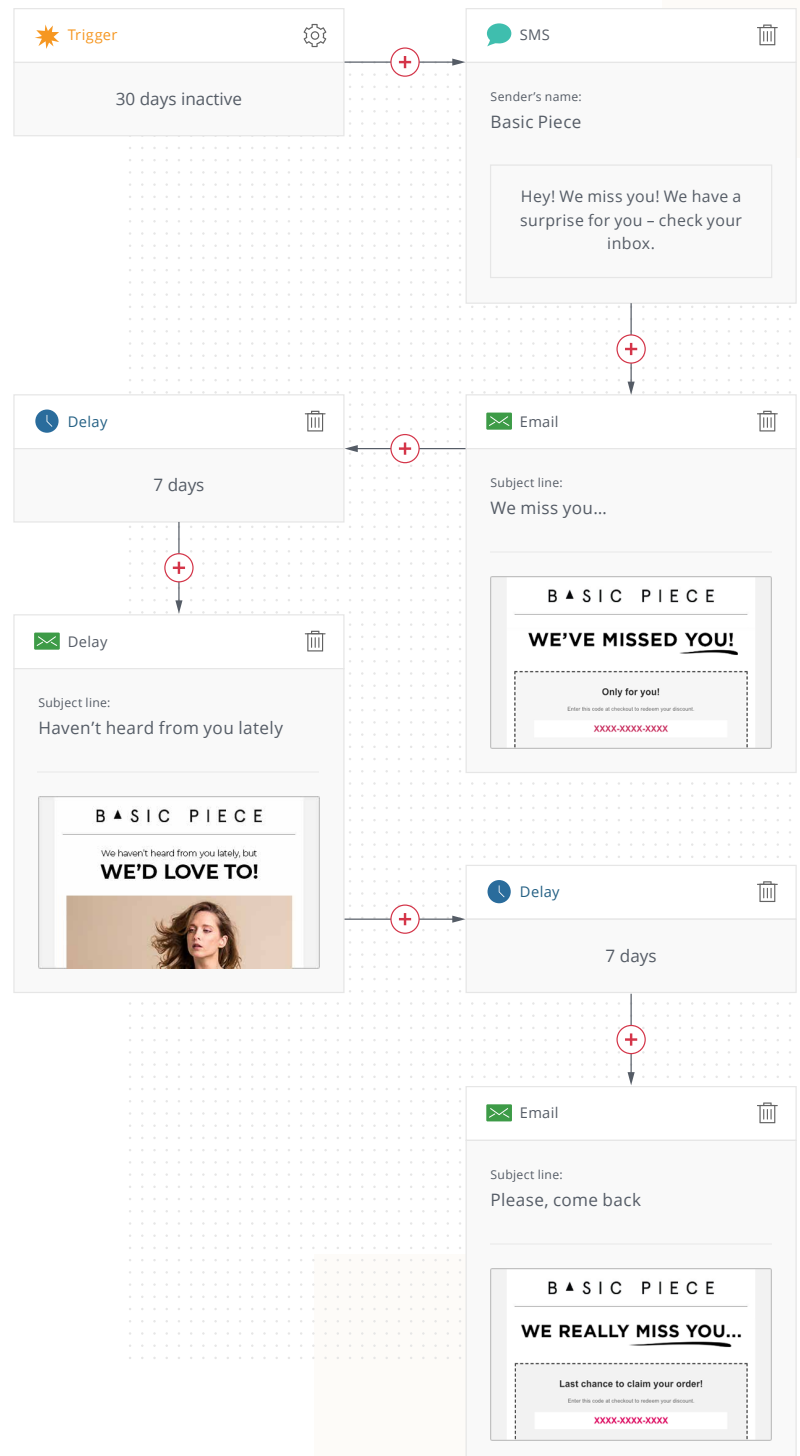
"

Don't forget about what comes after acquisition. Black Friday doesn't have to be a bunch of one-shot purchases: use the holiday to create life-long customers.

Rytis Lauris,
Omnisend
@RytisLauris

One of the most effective automated workflows is customer reactivation which aims to show appreciation for your customers and invites them to shop again. Find the example on the right.

If you don't have data for sending text messages, use FB messenger instead, and combine it with Facebook retargeting for a reactivation campaign. Be visible to customers that already know your brand and trust you, and when they are looking for a place to shop, they will finally land on your site.

Trigger

30 days inactive

SMS

Sender's name:

Basic Piece

Hey! We miss you! We have a surprise for you – check your inbox.

Email

Subject line:

We miss you...

B ▲ S I C   P I E C E

WE'VE MISSED YOU!

Only for you!

Enter this code at checkout to redeem your discount.

XXXX-XXXX-XXXX

Delay

7 days

Delay

Subject line:

Haven't heard from you lately

B ▲ S I C   P I E C E

We haven't heard from you lately, but

WE'D LOVE TO!

Delay

7 days

Email

Subject line:

Please, come back

B ▲ S I C   P I E C E

WE REALLY MISS YOU...

Last chance to claim your order!

Enter this code at checkout to redeem your discount.

XXXX-XXXX-XXXX

03

Draft and Execute Your Newsletter Campaigns

Although all merchants send BFCM newsletter campaigns, it would be a lost opportunity for you not to send it as well. The market is huge, but there is enough space for everyone.

However, go the extra mile to get the customer attention you desire.

Keep reading to find great tips and examples to include in your next newsletter campaign.

3.1. Segment Your List and Personalise Your Messages

Personalization is an expectation today, and your customers are over being sold to with generic messages and campaigns. Instead, leverage the data you have to create truly custom messages for your customers.

For example, if your brand caters to US customers, try developing geographical campaigns, include different location-based phrases and mention well-known landmarks. Tailor it even more with additional segments, like women between the ages of 25-35 in the Pacific Northwest.

You'll earn more revenue through personalization. Because if your customers feel understood, they are more likely to purchase from a brand they consider a trusted friend.

Sending bulk campaigns to all your subscribers might also affect your sender's profile as well as deliverability. So creating segments and approaching your audience in smaller chunks is a must-do for every merchant.

There are many different ways to segment your audience. Check out the following segment ideas:

1. **Segments based on previous purchasing behavior**

   You can create a segment of your "outlet collection" buyers. This segment is more price-sensitive and definitely look for the best prices.

   Meanwhile, customers who have bought items from new collections tend to look for new things and their priorities are different. For them, an offer with "limited edition products" can look more attractive. Maybe this segment even doesn't need such a big discount than the customers from the first segment.

   You may also slice your audience into segments of custom-ers that bought different categories of your products. If a male customer bought shoes from you, send him an offer for shoes that are similar.

"

Customers are tired of the one-size-fits-all messages. Be creative & start using your customer data to create one-of-a-kind campaigns.

Shayla Price,
@shaylaprice

2. Segment your audience according to the number of orders placed

For example, you can use three different segments to outreach all your customers:

- New subscribers, no orders yet. Shoot them with store-wide discounts.

- 1-2 orders placed. Remind them of their previous great experience with you and offer store-wide discounts. Ideally, segment them once again and send them categories of the products they've already bought from you.

- 3 and more orders placed. These are your loyal customers. Treat them, offer them a VIP discount or free shipping or something to make them feel special and spend more.

It's true that Black Friday is all about acquisition. However, this doesn't mean that you neglect your loyal customers, nor ignore the opportunity to create loyal customers from the new ones you've brought in.

Get retention strategies and campaigns in place before Black Friday hits to keep those new customers coming back again and again.

"

Rather than think of Black Friday as a mad rush to get as many sales as possible with a churn & burn mentality, focus on your loyal customers first.

Sam Hurley,
OPTIM-EYEZ
@sam_hurley

3.2. Pick Beautiful Email Templates

After analyzing dozens of Black Friday newsletters, there are key takeaways from the campaigns that perform the best:

· Simple, clean designs look best.

· A message should be straight forward.

· Adding urgency is highly recommended.

· Commitment to your brand design is crucial.

· Focus on shorter emails and avoid too many CTA's.

According to those takeaways, we prepared easy-to-implement newsletter templates that you can definitely use, both the layout and copy, no matter what tool for emailing you use.
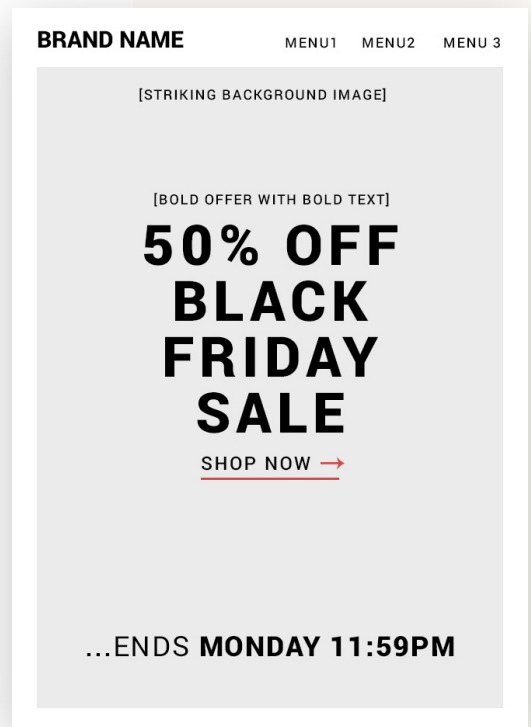
3.2.1 The minimal, bold Black Friday email template

This email template is very easy to design and it can fit many brands. You can even use the exact wording adapting the offer based on what you can do.

Add urgency in the subject line and set it to expire at midnight on Cyber Monday, while customers are still urgently shopping.

Here's what one example would look like:

To fit the image, the text was moved to the right.
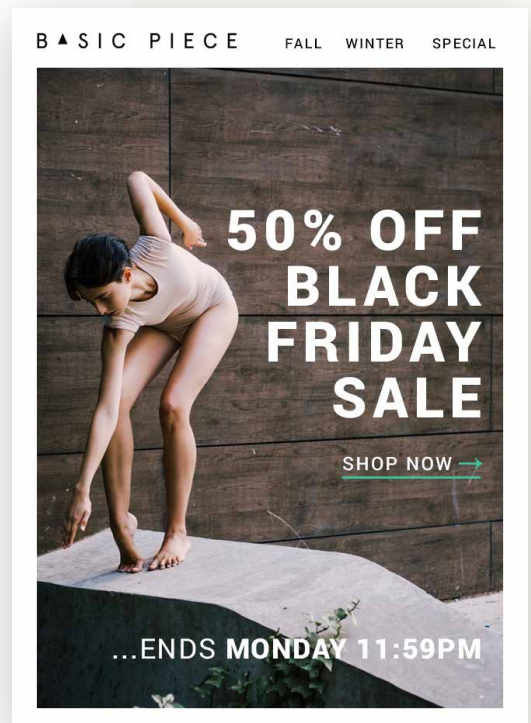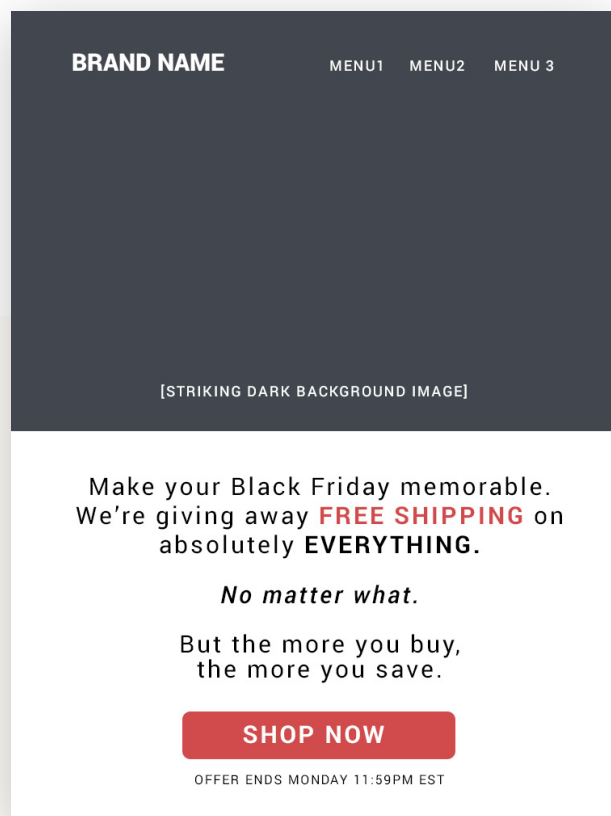

Example (1)

Example (2)

3.2.2. The simple, no-fuss Black Friday email template

If you use this template, make sure your top image is brand-focused, not product-focused.
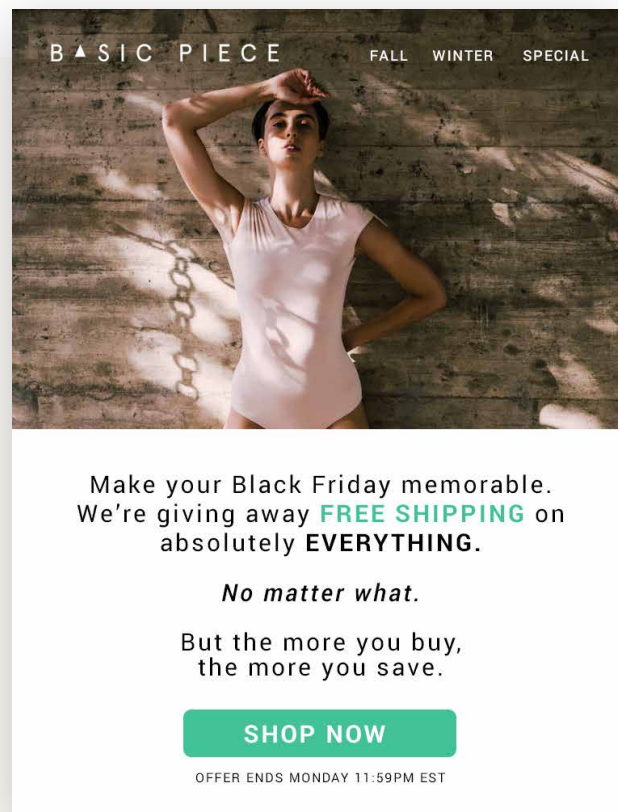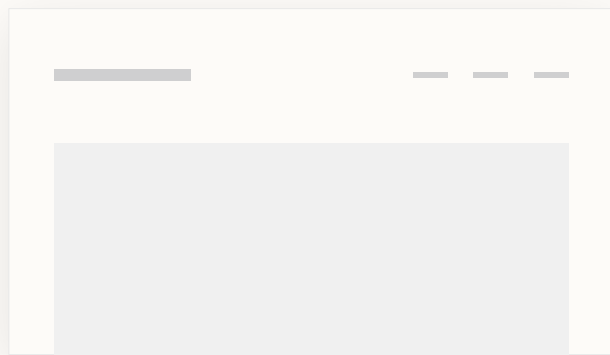
It can include the product, but by brand-focused we mean something that creates a mood consistent with your brand.

The copy in this example is essential. Keep one big, easy-to-see CTA button. You can use that same color to highlight one important part of your copy.

In the images below, you can see the template for the email and the email itself.

Example (1)

Example (2)

3.2.3. The product-focused Black Friday email template

This one was inspired by some famous fashion brands' email campaigns.

They're focused on the products, but present them as being curated specifically for the audience. See Example (1) on the right.

Here, we lead in with a nice image (not product-focused, but reflecting the sale) and then go into the products.

The products are all linked by image and product titles, but there's only one obvious CTA button. If you're using this email template, try to actually segment your users (by either behavior or other data) and work on curating that list specifically for that segment.
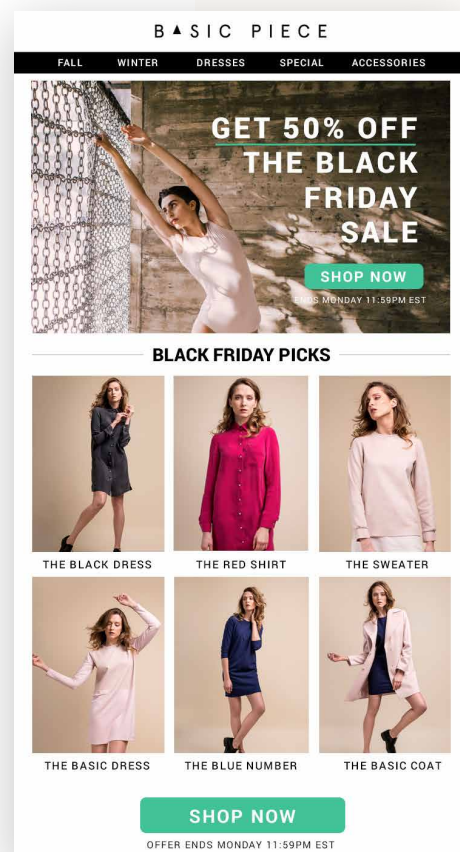
For example, those customers that have bought a lot of shoes – focus on footwear or shoe-related products.

For dresses, you'll add a different group of products, etc. See Example (2) on the right.

These are just some examples of what you can do with these Black Friday email templates. For more for inspiration, you can check our recent blog post.
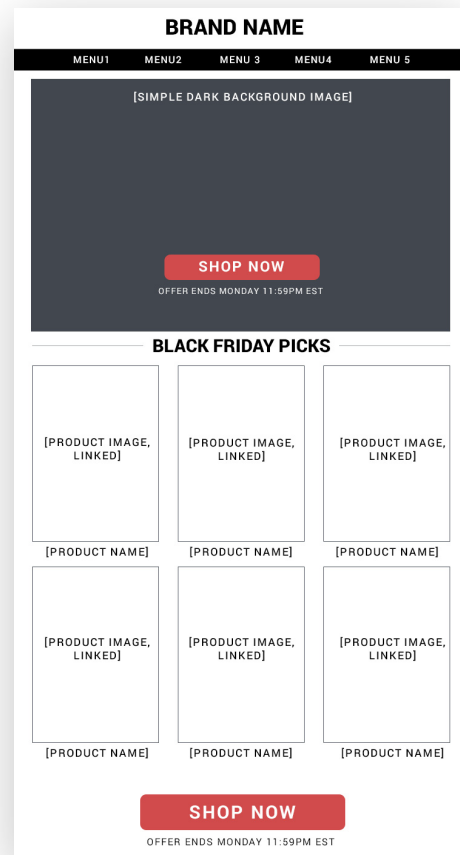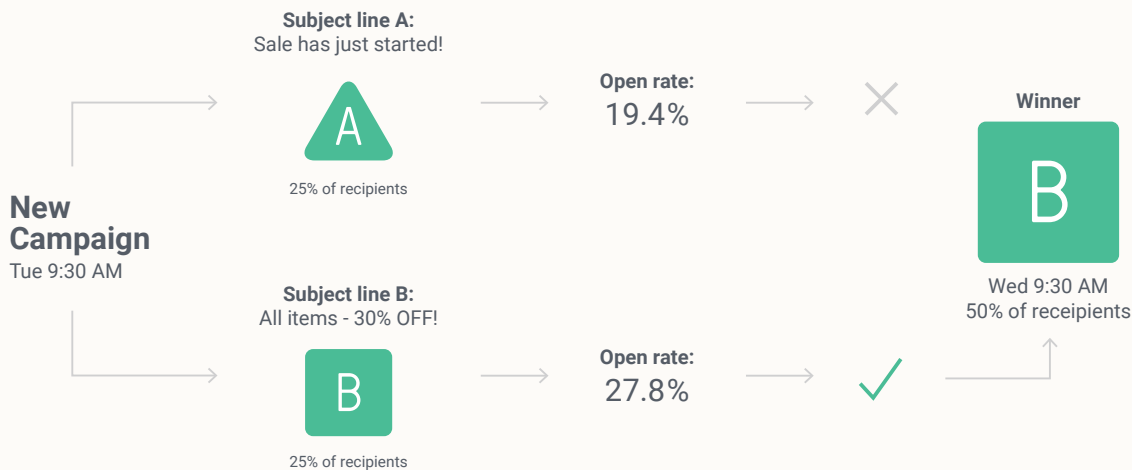

Example (1)

Example (2)

3.3. A/B test your subject lines

For high open and conversion rates, you need appealing subject lines. We looked through our customer data from last year to see which subject lines worked the best so you can use the same tips for your Black Friday campaigns.

Due high volume of messages, competition in inboxes will be significantly increased. Instead of an average 18% open rate, you may get only a humble 12%. That's why you should do A / B testing on your email subject lines and learn what subject line will bring you better results.

Check out how you can A / B test with Omnisend below:

Sample A/B Testing Campaign

Subject line A:
Sale has just started!

A

25% of recipients

Open rate:
19.4%

✕

New Campaign
Tue 9:30 AM

Winner

B

Wed 9:30 AM
50% of receipients

Subject line B:
All items - 30% OFF!

B

25% of recipients

Open rate:
27.8%

✓

Version A will go to 25% of your recipients, version B to another 25%, and the winning subject line will go to the remaining 50%.

It's important to treat your A/B testing as a scientific experiment. Don't test multiple variables at the same time. Instead, test one thing at a time to really hammer out the perfect formula. Here are a few ideas about what you can test:

1. Test the subject lines with a different discount to see if % or $ signs work better for your subscribers.

2. Test the same subject line with and without emojis. You will get valuable insight into how your subscribers react to emojis. If positively, emojis will help you get noticed every time you email your list.

3. Test subject lines with the subscriber's name included and without. See for yourself if using the name works better. Don't forget to review your list of subscribers to see if all the names that the subscribers have entered are valid. Sometimes people enter just "qwerty" instead of their real names. In this case it would be better to just delete the entry and leave only the email address.

4. Try different versions of subject lines, ones indicating the limited time offer and ones without it. You'll understand if your subscribers react to this kind of pressure to click on the email and buy.

5. Test if sending email campaigns from a person or using your business name generates better open rates. The same could be tested with the sender's addresses – test a general business email address (e.g. *hello@mybusiness.com*) vs. your personal one (*name@yourbusiness.com*).

6. Test the different templates we've listed above. Maybe larger images will work better for your customers, and try testing the images you use in those templates.

7. Test different copy in your email campaigns to see which is the most effective.

8. Try multiple kinds of CTAs (not at once) to see which CTAs get the biggest CTR.

3.4. Repeatedly approach subscribers that didn't open your initial email campaign

As mentioned before, during the holiday rush, the open rate drops to 12-13%. So you will have a lot of subscribers that will somehow miss your email in their inboxes. You can blame subscribers for being overwhelmed with emails, bad message timing, or the subject line – that's not so important anymore.

You can give a second chance to your campaign by resending it with a new subject line to subscribers that didn't open your initial one. The data shows that resending your campaign to non-openers can improve your campaign results significantly.

What can you do next with your promotion? Outreach the audience that hasn't opened both of your emails via text messages.

The popularity of SMS/text messages is growing significantly. More and more businesses use this channel to reach their audiences. Last year, Omnisend customers spoke about yielding more than 2000% ROI from this channel.
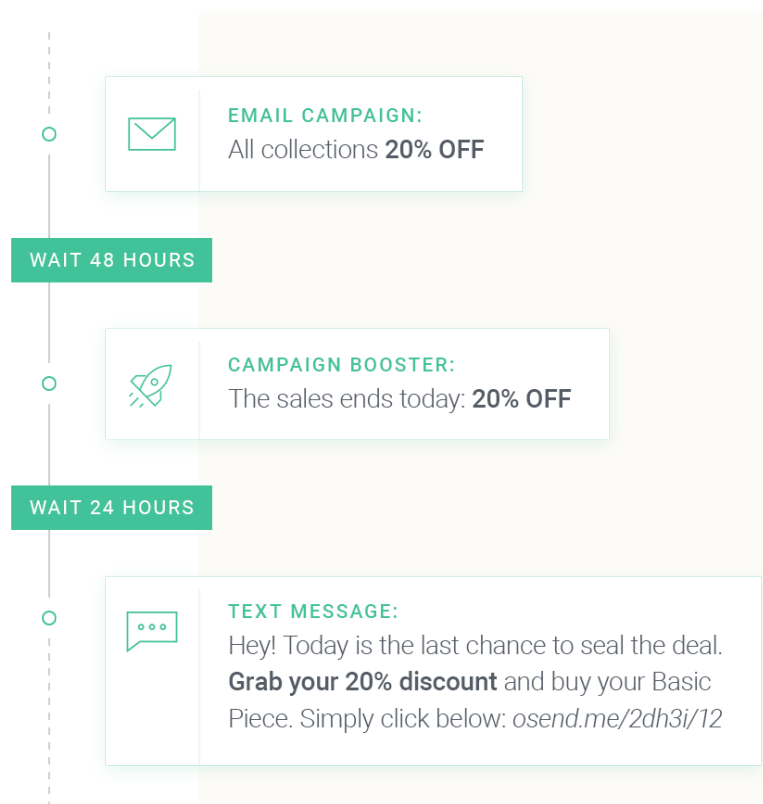
Furthermore, this workflow is cost-effective because the vast majority of your audience is being reached via email, which is the most affordable of all channels. And you invest more into text messages only for those subscribers that you didn't succeed in reaching via newsletter. For this scenario, you will need the following:

1. Phone numbers of your subscribers. You still have time to update your signup forms and start gathering the data.

2. An email service provider that would be capable of providing you with email re-sending and integrated SMS service.

So these are the main preparedness guidelines and ideas for upcoming ecommerce holidays. Even if you aren't be implementing all of them, pick something that fits your business best.

Now, quickly go through the main checkpoints once again so you wouldn't miss anything vital for this BFCM weekend 2019.
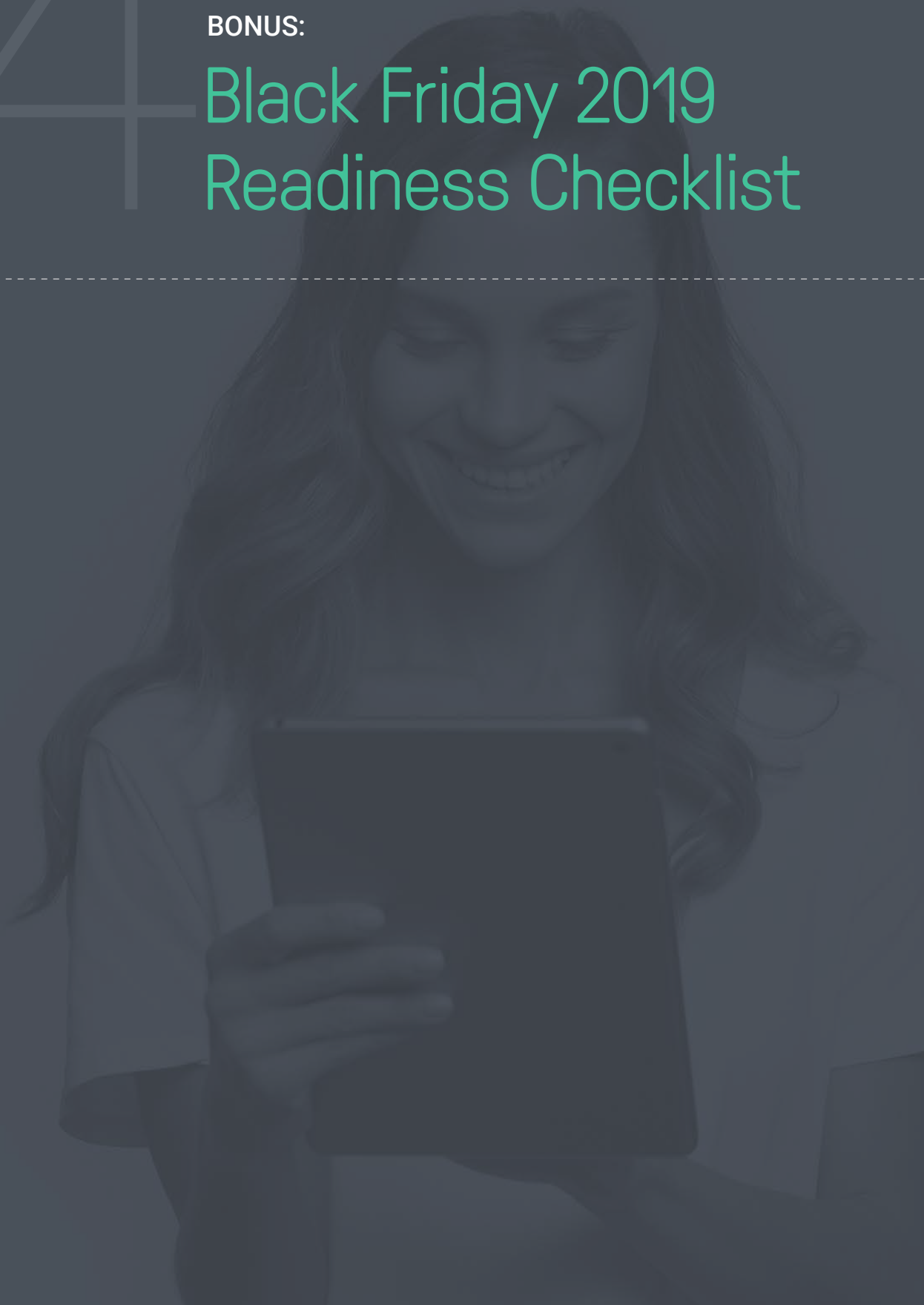
EMAIL CAMPAIGN:
All collections **20% OFF**

WAIT 48 HOURS

CAMPAIGN BOOSTER:
The sales ends today: **20% OFF**

WAIT 24 HOURS

TEXT MESSAGE:
Hey! Today is the last chance to seal the deal. **Grab your 20% discount** and buy your Basic Piece. Simply click below: *osend.me/2dh3i/12*

04

BONUS:

Black Friday 2019 Readiness Checklist

Black Friday 2019 Readiness Checklist

1. Your website is technically ready for big visitors' flow ☐

2. The mobile version of the website is looking and working fine ☐

3. Categories for quick shopping are in place ☐

4. "No-hassle Returns" is highlighted on your site ☐

5. Signup forms are up-to-date ☐

6. Automated Welcome Series is launched ☐

7. Automated Abandoned cart workflow is launched ☐

8. Automated Reactivation workflow is launched ☐

9. The BFCM campaign schedule is ready ☐

10. The promotional material for campaigns is ready ☐

11. The main segments for your BFCM campaigns are ready ☐

12. The templates for your campaigns are ready ☐

13. Ideas for subject lines to test are ready ☐

READY TO START

Make Marketing Relevant with Omnisend

Omnisend is a robust all-in-one omnichannel marketing automation platform that empowers marketers to improve their ROI, increase their sales, and improve their customer relationships.

We help you stay connected to your customers, no matter what channel they use: email, SMS, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, and many more. With Omnisend's marketing automation, you can integrate several channels into the same workflow that will shave hours off your week and keep your customers on the hook.

High Growth Commerce Brands Choose Omnisend

With thousands of 5-star reviews on G2Crowd, Capterra, and GetApp, our **50,000 customers love us,** and we think you will too.

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