5 Black Friday E-Commerce Personalization Tips

Discover how to personalize like a pro on the world’s busiest shopping day
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Black Friday, which traditionally began the day after Thanksgiving, marks one of the biggest events in the retail calendar — what started as a singular day to score some good deals, if you could manage to stumble out of the house in your turkey-induced haze, has turned into the ultimate shopping bonanza. That moniker has not been earned without cause: just online, consumers spent over $9 billion, up +21.6% year-over-year (YoY), on Black Friday 2020. In fact, Bloomreach reporting saw a +67% YoY growth in traffic and +22% YoY revenue bump on Black Friday 2020 in North America.
While Black Friday can bring massive gains to brands, there are a ton of pitfalls too. It’s crucial that brands knock the commerce experience out of the park to boost revenue and earn loyal customers who will shop with your business year-round.

Brands need to invest in their site experience, adding personalization that adjusts to shoppers’ behaviors, and ensure the process of getting customers to checkout is smooth. That excellent experience also needs to extend throughout the marketing journey: across email, mobile, Push, and more. True personalization means tailoring every experience a customer can have with your brand to match their unique needs. Delivering that level of personalization will set you above the noise of Black Friday and inspire true brand loyalty with customers.

We’ve gathered together expert opinions and top tips for how you can incorporate personalization into your Black Friday 2021 strategy to drive growth — let’s dive in.
$9bn consumers spent +21.6% YoY on Black Friday 2020
5 Black Friday E-Commerce Personalization Tips
1. Use Personalized Product Recommendations to Drive Exploration and Purchases

There’s something serendipitously delightful when you get onto your favorite brand’s site and front and center is a Black Friday find you’ve been looking all over for — but in reality, brands aren’t just guessing at what you want. Marketers and site managers alike know it’s not serendipity that’s responsible: it’s great technology and talented e-commerce professionals who pulled it off.

With the help of AI/ML, it’s a breeze to add these delightful recommendations across your site and marketing communications. With tools like Bloomreach Discovery,
these recommendations are generated from all of the customer data you amass as customers browse your site and interact with your marketing — Bloomreach then references this understanding of the customer against your vast product catalogs to produce recommendations most likely to either further the discovery journey, or fuel purchases.

In addition to recommendations based on individual customer behaviors, you can also leverage macro patterns to help drive discovery and purchasing. For example, let’s say that your data points to the Teddy Bear being the ‘it’ toy for Black Friday 2021 — you can then show customers more Teddy Bears on your home page, in search results, and on product pages using descriptors like “Hottest Toys for 2021” or “Shoppers Like You Loved”.
Getting more granular, you can even filter results and recommendations by what Teddy Bears are high in stock and need to be sold, which fit the implicit preferences of each shopper, and more. It’s all about using the customer and product data you have to improve upon the commerce experience — make it easier and more delightful for customers to find what they’re seeking.
2. Extend Meaningful Personalization to Marketing Channels, Like Email

Though you can reach customers on more channels than ever before, email continues to be a fan favorite and garners impressive ROI. Email also presents a fantastic opportunity to personalize your marketing campaigns in meaningful ways to drive engagement.

Whether you’re sending regular newsletters and roundups, automated abandoned cart emails, or a special weekend promotion, personalization is key. Meaningful personalization means doing more than adding in <First_Name>, it means taking into account each customer’s past behaviors and preferences to deliver
delightful communications that enhance their overall commerce experience.

And not only does personalizing make customers happy, but it also drives results for your business. At Bloomreach, we use Optimal send time, a prediction model that takes into account the past behavior of your customers and calculates the time when customers are most likely to interact with your campaign, and sends messages accordingly, to improve engagement. Reaching customers at the right time on a busy (and email-dense) day like Black Friday is key to success.

Bloomreach Engagement customer Weird Fish has implemented one of our Plug&Play use cases, watchdog automatic price drop alert, to boost conversion rates. It ran an email campaign for customers who had browsed full-price items but had not converted. By connecting Weird Fish’s product catalog to Bloomreach, they were able to trigger an email with a ‘price drop’ alert — with fantastic results. Their team increased conversion rates and unlocked further revenue potential through personalization based on past behaviors.

Although it’s easy to focus on the immediate gains of Black Friday, the holiday presents a great opportunity to bolster your loyalty programs with personalization. As customers shop ‘til they drop on Black Friday, make sure they’ve opted
into communications so you can use the data they’ve left behind to personalize their experience all year round (and keep them coming back for more). The data customers generate can be stored in a Customer Data Platform, like Bloomreach Engagement, and then used across email, mobile, SMS, your website, and more.

Reward loyal customers and encourage recurring purchases with specialized landing pages, easily crafted with Bloomreach Content, that invite customers to your loyalty program or deliver special offers for customers with high LTVs.
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3. Optimize for Results by A/B Testing Before the Holidays Hit

A/B testing is one of the best ways to ensure the campaigns, landing pages, and content you’ve created for the holidays and Black Friday resonate with your customers. When you have one weekend to generate a large portion of your revenue, every touchpoint with your customers can make or break the success of your Black Friday.

Across your marketing, there are tons of opportunities to test phrasing to ensure your copy is as compelling as possible — and resonates with your target audience. Of course, there are the basics, like testing email subject lines, SMS CTAs, and other marketing copy, but you can also take this methodology even further this Black Friday.
The **Thinking Traveller** leveraged **Bloomreach Engagement’s** testing capabilities to optimize web layer copy during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic and establish trust and clarity in an uncertain time. Through testing their newly premiered “Shortlist Guidance Cards” with customized recommendations based on a traveler’s preferences and past behaviors, they saw a 33% uplift in submitted inquiries amongst the test variant compared to the control group, which did not see the shortlist guidance card.

Your website is a fantastic place to leverage **A/B testing** for the holidays. You can test your various assumptions and decisions across your site in places like search results — should you bury products in specific results to drive engagement? For example, a merchandiser might think...
burying results tagged “children’s bike” when a customer searches “teen bikes” is wise, but A/B testing might show that parents are looking to get their tween a new bike for the holidays and, in fact, those are the most clicked items for that search query.

Going further, testing is extremely useful when trying to determine which copy will drive better results on key Black Friday landing and product pages. Bloomreach Content makes it a breeze to build these new pages in time for the holidays and ensure that you’re making your character limits count. No more guessing if “Black Friday Bike Deals” or “Major Steals on Favorite Bikes” are the best headings. Instead, test and learn!
4. Fuel Conversions With 1:1 Experiences for Shoppers

The first step in ensuring your customers have a meaningful experience with your brand is through segmentation. By creating rich, AI-driven segments, you can better group your customers by their unique attributes, behaviors, and stage within the customer journey. You can create complex, always up-to-date segments in Bloomreach Engagement based on your specific business goals — such as conversion, loyalty, engagement, and more.

For Black Friday, advanced segmentation is especially useful to group customers and align their messaging, recommendations, and communication medium to what
will yield the best results for your business. Using data gathered and unified into Single Customer Views, you can segment customers into different lifecycle stages, such as first-time buyers, VIPs, etc., to curate their holiday shopping experience. These segments, along with behavioral data previously gathered, will help get your customers engaging, browsing, and converting quicker come Black Friday.

For new customer segments, target them with best-selling products on category pages and track (if users are opted in to share cookies) where users click to eventually share more relevant products the next time they land on your site and get to searching. Even search results can be personalized with AI-driven tools like Bloomreach Discovery.

As customers move along their journey and their relationship with your brand matures, you must keep things fresh and enticing. By placing product recommendations in the right place during the browsing and buying experience, you can help frequent and infrequent buyers alike towards conversion. With Bloomreach Content, both marketers and site managers can easily build new landing pages specific to the journey stage, interests, behaviors, and more — with meaningful personalization sprinkled throughout.
5. Utilize Zero-Party Data for Success Beyond Black Friday

Although Black Friday certainly takes up a large space in your mind (and you likely prepare for it year-round), it isn’t the only day that counts for hitting your revenue targets. How can you be prepared to deliver amazing commerce experiences the other 364 days of the year?

The answer might have once been through aggressive acquisition and third-party data but that is now a thing of the past, and considered bad business. For forward-thinking retail and e-commerce businesses, the answer lies in zero-party data. What is zero-party data, you ask?
Zero-party data is data that a customer intentionally and proactively shares with a brand. It can include preference center data, purchase intentions, personal contexts, and how an individual wants to be recognized by the brand. Forrester Research was the first to introduce this term and collecting zero-party data has since become increasingly important to companies across the globe.

Zero-party data is the best way to ensure you hit the commerce experience out of the park all year round while building trust and respecting customer privacy. Bloomreach Engagement is the perfect solution to help you launch or revamp your zero-party data strategy. All within one platform, you can unify all of your customer data streams and deliver a 1:1 marketing and commerce experience, across all channels.

With Bloomreach Engagement’s native AI and ML, the data you collect will always be learning against itself to automate more personal, effective customer experiences.
With Bloomreach Content, both marketers and site managers can easily build new landing pages specific to the journey stage... with meaningful personalization sprinkled throughout.
Personalization in Practice
Personalization in Practice

For each business, personalization may mean something different in practice, but it’s always to achieve the same goal: delivering a delightful, meaningful experience for your customers. Discover how a few organizations are excelling at personalization in time for Black Friday (and all-year-round too).
When you think about what companies set the gold standard for in personalization, Netflix is probably one of the first to come to mind. They created a unique video viewing experience that’s kick-started the on-demand revolution and most media companies now follow its example.

The data-driven content platform and production company make every effort to help its users discover great content that they will enjoy. Netflix achieves this by going beyond basic personalization and customizing different levels of the user journey — from what videos are suggested, profile organization, and even how the artwork is displayed on the page.
This deep level of personalization combines multiple different algorithms that address each profile’s specific needs and ensures that users spend less time searching for content and more time enjoying the viewing experience. Very soon users segmented as “Holiday Movie Lovers” will be seeing cheesy holiday movie content galore on their homepage — and users without this affinity will be spared, thus improving each user’s overall experience.
Just because you don’t have a Netflix-scale budget and resources doesn’t mean you have to forsake personalization and curated recommendations.

A leading general e-shop in the Czech Republic, Mall.CZ, launched a video campaign that sent 20,000 personalized videos to a specifically targeted audience with the help of Bloomreach Engagement. Centered around Mall.TV’s series “Life is a Game”, the video campaign was enormously successful monetarily and in boosting brand awareness.

By collecting and unifying customer data, Mall.CZ was able to generate scenarios where each shopper was the protagonist in the television series. The users who were
targeted by the video bought 701% more worth of products in the Mall.CZ shopping gallery compared to others who saw the same offer in a different (non-personalized) manner — proving that delightful, personalized experiences do translate into impressive results for brands.
The Mall.CZ users who were targeted with personalized videos bought 701% more worth of products — proving that delightful, personalized experiences do translate into impressive results for brands.
Staples continuously innovates its commerce experience for the better. With new competitors like Amazon constantly upping their game, Staples was not going to rest on its laurels.

It has increased the number of stock-keeping units (SKUs) on its websites to 2 million — a 10-fold increase — and charted a course to become the best retailer for B2B office supplies. With so many new items to search for on its site, Staples knew it needed a stellar Search solution to make the product browsing experience a positive one.

They turned to Bloomreach Discovery’s deep understanding of natural language to understand how customers search
— and then personalize search results based on contextual behavioral data to make sure the right products are seen in the right order for the right person.

With Bloomreach, Staples is not only providing a wonderful shopping experience and a larger product catalog to their customers but the team’s time spent on manual rule writing required was also dramatically reduced. This has allowed the Staples team to focus on higher-level problems and more creative solutions. A win-win for online retailing!
In its quest to optimize site experiences, Carrefour has chosen Bloomreach Content to produce richer, more effective pages to drive results. Bloomreach’s flexible, easy-to-use Content Management System has allowed Carrefour to seamlessly make the changes needed across its site to serve customers and scale with increased traffic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Carrefour team encountered Black Friday levels of traffic to the site almost overnight, but they took it in their stride with help from Bloomreach. The Carrefour team was able to see great results, even in unprecedented times, thanks to Bloomreach’s headless architecture that enabled greater productivity, flexibility, and speed for Carrefour.
The vast amount of data generated across the site has also helped further inform decisions and improve the overall customer experience. By using this data, the Carrefour team has an opportunity to generate new insights to help website visitors have a better user experience via personalized offers, content, or recommendations unique to each customer — which fuels longer browsing sessions that, in turn, help Bloomreach function even better at personalization.
Hit A Holiday Home Run
Black Friday + Bloomreach = Holiday Home Run

Thank you for running through our top tips to win this Black Friday and we at Bloomreach hope your holiday season 2021 is one for the books!

Our e-commerce experts are on hand to answer any questions you may have and dive deeper into how Bloomreach can help you reach your business goals year-round through transforming your commerce experience.

Bloomreach is the worldwide leader in e-commerce personalization. Our Discovery, Content, and Engagement
platforms comprise the Bloomreach Commerce Experience Cloud — your ticket to unlocking digital commerce growth. To learn more about how Bloomreach provides the tools needed to facilitate experiences so personalized they feel like magic, schedule a demo today.

For more on how to personalize your commerce experience like the world’s top brands do with Bloomreach, check out our E-Commerce Personalization: 2021 Complete Guide.
Bloomreach is the world’s #1 Commerce Experience Cloud, empowering brands to deliver customer journeys so personalized, they feel like magic.

It offers a suite of products that drive true personalization and digital commerce growth, including: Discovery, offering AI-driven search and merchandising; Content, offering a headless CMS; and Engagement, offering a leading CDP and marketing automation solutions. Together, these solutions combine the power of unified customer and product data with the speed and scale of AI-optimization, enabling revenue-driving digital commerce experiences that convert on any channel and every journey.

Bloomreach serves over 850 global brands including Albertsons, Bosch, Puma, FC Bayern München, and Marks & Spencer.

For more information, visit Bloomreach.com, follow us on Twitter @Bloomreach_tm and on LinkedIn.

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