

Smart m-commerce opportunities for Black Friday and beyond

By [James Bayhack](#)

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Arguably the world's biggest sales day of the year, Black Friday presents a prime opportunity to attract existing and new customers to your physical or digital store. It's also a fantastic time to capture valuable customer data, helping you better understand who your customers are, what makes them tick, and what they're after.



Credit: cottonbro via Pexels

This year, Black Friday takes place on 27 November, but South African brands are already releasing details about their extended deal periods, with Makro and Game promising month-long specials. After depressed economic demand caused by the pandemic and lockdown, there's no doubt that retailers will be using the annual event to attract spend and make up for lost time.

With so many specials on offer and so much competitor noise, how can brands not only stand out, but also meet this increased demand with excellent customer service? And how can they then use the period as an opportunity to build a customer base that stays loyal long after the Black Friday dust has settled?

For businesses that want to make the most of the day, the answer lies in using data to provide the right deals at the right time, creating sustainable customer relationships, and finding scalable customer service solutions.



Game prepares for full month of Black Friday deals

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Offering the right deals at the right time

According to retail tracker [Black Friday Global](#), interest in Black Friday has jumped by 9,900% in South Africa over the last five years, compared to global growth of 117% during the same period. A [GeoPoll data report](#) also revealed a 16% increase in Black Friday shopping from 2017 to 2019, with 76% of South African respondents in 2019 indicating that they had shopped on Black Friday.

By now, South Africans are familiar with Black Friday deals, and only the best discounts on the right products will grab their attention. Data can help brands make more informed decisions about how and when they target which customers, ensuring they deliver relevant and impactful marketing campaigns and, in turn, increasing sales. But this is only possible if they have the right tools in place to collect and analyse this data.

This is where a customer data platform (CDP) comes into play. With a CDP, data is pulled from multiple sources, cleaned, and combined to create a single view of a customer in return for a more personalised customer journey. Everything that is personal can be added to a customer profile. Think CRM, purchase orders, email responses, social media chats, and more. In other words, companies have easy access to everything, from past shopping behaviour to birthdays, helping them show the right deals to the right customers.

More than that, they can segment customers by demographics and interests to deliver personalised messages that really resonate with recipients. Similarly, data can be used to deliver more enticing deals. If retailers see that a particular category or product isn't selling well, they can make changes on the fly, whereas before, campaigns needed to be planned well in advance.



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Building sustainable relationships

Although Black Friday can be a quick win for brands looking to temporarily boost sales, it could also be used as an opportunity to build lasting customer relationships if businesses focus on more than just making a sale on 27 November.

To really benefit from it, they should look at the user journey before, during, and after Black Friday in a holistic way. What personalised communication do customers want to see after they've bought from your brand? How can you segment customers to continue to offer them relevant information and make them believe that their needs are your priority?

Smart companies will use the period to attract more customers, and then hold onto them with a peerless user journey and experience. For example, offering the same customer who bought a yoga mat on Black Friday yoga pants during the Christmas sale shows initiative; predicting exactly what customers want before they ask for it increases purchases and customer satisfaction.

Not only that, but this strategy is cheaper and more efficient, as it costs less to keep selling to existing customers and attract recurring business than it is to spend advertising money to attract new ones.

South African retailers should prepare for a predominantly online Black Friday





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Harnessing scalable solutions

Many businesses know that demand is likely to increase over this period, but they don't have the capacity to meet that demand, and hiring extra service staff for a month is just not feasible.

Offering great deals and then having your website crash, your phone lines clog up, or your service staff overwhelmed could damage your brand and put customers off permanently. Not to mention that creating manual campaigns for every product category or product (like yoga pants) is very labour intensive.

Instead, companies should look for flexible solutions that allow them to scale up as necessary and meet that demand. Automated personalisation, like chatbots, is just one example of a scalable solution that brands can tap into for hyper-personalised campaigns and elevated customer service during and after the Black Friday rush.

Ensuring marketing continuity

This advice is not just relevant to Black Friday. Businesses that put these practices into place will also be able to harness them to make the most of other important retail periods, like the festive season, Valentine's Day, and many others.

Always remember though, marketing doesn't stop on ordinary days – it's a continuous, consistent journey of engaging your customers with personalisation and relevance throughout the year through multiple channels, resulting in active, satisfied customers 365 days a year.

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