

Black Friday: Sow now, reap later

 By [Grant Fleming](#)

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There's no doubt that Black Friday (and the subsequent Cyber Monday) has firmly embedded itself as part of the local sales cycle. With the annual shopping frenzy only due in November, it does not mean that marketers should not be preparing already.



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In the lead generation sphere, dealing with marketing via email or SMS messaging, this has everything to do with starting to curate your audience as soon as possible. And one of the first steps in doing so is understanding your response audience: Who is responding to what kind of marketing message and/or product message?

Curating your lists

This means sifting through your past campaigns to gain insight into understanding which messages appealed to what audience. Once there is this broader understanding, the next step would be to split these audiences and target/personalise your campaigns accordingly. This allows you to drive home highly relevant and targeted messages when the time is right. While you will still have overarching, messaging going out to the whole base, shorter, targeted bursts will increase return on investment (ROI) significantly.

It will serve marketers well to take a personal interest in curating the audience, ensuring that all dead leads and non-responders are removed (a good platform does this automatically), and product relevance remains aligned with list audience. If you are constantly contacting your audience and they have good engagement with your messaging and content, it's easy to ensure the correct message is going to the correct audience and shift non-responders into other brackets.

But when to start?

When then is a good time to start punting your Black Friday deals to your newly formed lists? Marketers don't want to hit the audience too early, especially when it comes to expensive SMS campaigns, so avoid anything more than two weeks before the big day.

Luckily email allows a bit more leeway regarding time frame, with the motto here too, “work smart than hard.” This means using all your campaigns leading up to Black Friday – Christmas in July, Month-end specials, a Birthday sale – to carefully curate your key audience. When you have this select, engaged email list, it’s time for the big marketing blasts before the big day. By doing so you are most likely to capture that audience before anyone else.

Sending out ‘warmer emails’ is a good idea if you haven’t communicated with your audience in a long time. Such an email, going out to an audience to ‘warm’ them up, notes Black Friday is coming up and that they have been identified as a customer that will have an active interest in upcoming deals. Furthermore, they should expect more promotional offers coming their way as the weeks progress. This can culminate in a massive push in the week, or so, leading up to Black Friday, not to forget a proper effort on the day itself to catch up with the excitement.

When things go wrong

Unfortunately, as we’ve seen with local websites not managing to pass the muster on Black Friday, things do go wrong. Businesses must understand the capacity of the underlying systems and know when it will be pushed too far. There is no point in throwing millions of people at a system if you know it has a high chance of going down.

Some campaign management software is better with dealing with on-the-spot campaign changes than others, so you can quickly ‘dequeue’ marketing messages if something goes wrong. This is critical since spend is wasted if your systems fail and you can’t do anything about further messaging going out.

Apart from your website going down, there is nothing that will stop a good Black Friday marketing campaign if great deals are on offer. Make sure people want to open your emails or read your SMS messages, knowing that if they do so, the chance is high that they will find something that they like. That said, getting your messaging lists right and sending out messages at the right time is key to a successful Black Friday.

ABOUT GRANT FLEMING

Grant Fleming has held senior management positions at leading tech, mobile and ecommerce companies. His current role is CEO of Leadify, an automated sales fulfilment channel that helps B2B and B2C brands and businesses turn internal IP into income. He drives the productisation and enhancement of this intelligent SMS and email platform allowing users to customise campaigns, control costs, performance and revenue and eliminate duplicates, overlaps, retargeting and bounce rates. Since launch in 2015, Leadify has processed over 1 billion messages.

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