

The 4 Phases of BFCM

A phase-by-phase operating plan for Black Friday and Cyber Monday, from July forecasting through go-time, with the Meta and Google Ads work that belongs in each window.

01**Planning & Prepping**

July — Mid-August

02**Building**

Mid-August — End of September

03**Ramping & Finalizing**

October — Early November

04**Go Time**

Mid-November — Cyber Monday

COVERS

Meta Ads & Google Ads

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Phase 1: Planning & Prepping

— JULY — MID-AUGUST

- **Forecast demand:** Project sales volumes and revenue targets based on last year's data, YoY growth, and planned promotions. Share forecasts with ops, finance, and leadership so everyone's aligned.
- **Place inventory orders:** Work with suppliers to ensure inventory can meet BFCM demand, factoring in lead times, shipping delays, and warehouse capacity.
- **Build promo calendar:** Outline exact offers, dates, and channels for all promos (not just BFCM weekend but also early-access, Cyber Monday, and post-BFCM).
- **Begin warming up accounts & lists:** Start sending higher cadence emails, posting on organic, and engaging audiences so ad accounts and email deliverability are "warmed" before the spike.

• Meta Ads

Audit last year's performance

Break it down by audience, creative, offer, even day and hour. Spot where you scaled profitably vs. where fatigue hit.

Plan structures + naming

Standardize naming conventions so you can pivot quickly. Map Evergreen vs. Promo campaigns, Prospecting vs. Retargeting.

Build the testing roadmap

Don't leave testing to Q4. Map out waves of creative testing (angles, hooks, formats) so learnings roll forward into October and your final BFCM ads aren't "new guesses."

• Google Ads

Audit last year's BFCM performance

Break down branded vs. non-brand spend, impression share lost, CPC spikes, and pacing across the key days. Identify where you over or under-invested.

Review Shopping feed health

Optimize product titles, descriptions, and attributes (GTINs, MPNs, schema). Catch errors early to avoid feed disapprovals.

Plan structural changes

Decide how to split prospecting vs. retargeting, PMax vs. Standard Shopping, and how to segment promo-specific campaigns. Ensure conversion tracking is airtight.

Phase 2: Building

— MID-AUGUST — END OF SEPTEMBER

- **Creative production:** Develop all assets across channels, which includes ad creative, email flows, SMS, landing pages, organic content. Make sure design and messaging are consistent across the funnel.
- **Lock in discount strategy & offers:** Finalize whether you're doing percentage discounts, bundles, tiered offers, or BOGO, and pressure-test margin impact.
- **Audience segmentation & list cleaning:** Segment customers (VIPs, repeat buyers, prospects, lapsed customers) and clean email/SMS lists for deliverability and engagement.
- **Start testing campaigns:** Launch early tests of offers, creatives, and messaging while CPMs are lower to identify top performers before the November surge.

• Meta Ads

Produce creative in batches

Develop UGC, statics, carousels, and short-form video for both Evergreen funnels and promos. Promo ads should build on top performers, not start from scratch.

Set up audiences early

Segment VIPs, purchasers, high-value lookalikes, engagers, and email lists. Label them so they can be activated instantly.

Run low-stakes tests

Validate creative, copy, and offers in September/early October before CPMs surge. Winners get promoted to BFCM campaigns.

• Google Ads

Get creative made for PMax, video, and display

Ensure promo-ready assets are uploaded early (headlines, videos, banners).

Build dedicated BFCM campaigns

Create ad groups for branded + promo keywords to flip live in November without disrupting evergreen.

Prep ad copy variations

Write multiple ad copies with promo hooks so you can rotate and test without delays.

Phase 3: Ramping & Finalizing

— OCTOBER — EARLY NOVEMBER

- **Scale testing into performance campaigns:** Shift budget toward proven winners, phasing out underperformers.
- **Nail down final ad sets, creative, and pages:** Freeze final versions so ops, design, and dev aren't scrambling during go-time.
- **Prep backup offers & contingencies:** Have secondary offers, creatives, and campaigns ready in case primary strategies underperform or inventory shifts.

• Meta Ads

Stress-test promos vs. Evergreen

Your best Evergreen ads (with social proof) will likely drive most conversions but validate urgency/gifting variants too.

Warm up VIP campaigns

Use loyalty or early-access ads to prime your highest-value buyers ahead of the peak.

Stage backups

Duplicate campaigns and creatives so if volatility hits, you can swap or relaunch instantly without scrambling.

• Google Ads

Ramp up branded search spend

Secure impression share against competitors who will bid aggressively on your brand.

Validate Shopping feeds and GMC policies

Fix errors and confirm no pending approvals that could derail campaigns mid-November.

Finalize extensions

Lock sitelinks, promo extensions, price extensions, and countdowns well in advance.

Develop bidding/spend plan

Model how CPCs, budgets, and seasonality adjustments will scale daily into BFCM week.

Phase 4: Go Time

— MID-NOVEMBER — BLACK FRIDAY / CYBER MONDAY

- **Full budget deployment:** Push heavy spend across all proven channels, leaning into winners.
- **Aggressive remarketing & email pushes:** Hit warm audiences hard like your VIPs, abandoned carts, and site visitors with urgency-driven messaging.
- **Live campaign monitoring & adjustments:** Monitor accounts in real time (hourly if needed), watching pacing, approvals, and conversion data.
- **Execute contingency plans if needed:** If demand or spend doesn't pace as planned, activate backup offers or adjust creative quickly to protect revenue.

• Meta Ads

Launch primary + contingency campaigns

Keep backups staged so you can flip them on in seconds if performance tanks.

Scale into volatility

Don't pull back when CPMs rise: scale aggressively into proven winners, guided by business-level metrics (site traffic, CR, total sales, profit).

Dial up urgency

Roll out countdowns, "last chance," and low-stock messaging. Expect attribution to lag: surf the wave using live profitability data, not Ads Manager alone.

• Google Ads

Implement ramp-up plan

Execute daily bidding and spend increases aligned with search demand surges.

Activate BFCM campaigns

Turn on promo keywords, updated ad copy, and specific BFCM ad groups.

Activate all promo extensions

Sale price, countdown timers, promotion highlights, sitelinks.

Monitor in real time

Track search queries, negative keywords, spend pacing, and apply bid/seasonality adjustments hourly if necessary.