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FREE CHECKLIST · E-COMMERCE

The 2026 Black Friday Online Store Checklist

Work through this in order. Tick what is done, circle what is not, and fix the circles first. Everything here is about one thing: making it easy for a shopper to find, trust and pay.

Fri 27 Nov 2026
BLACK FRIDAY

Mon 30 Nov 2026
CYBER MONDAY

Now to 20 Nov
Fix and test

21 to 25 Nov
Lock the offer, freeze changes

26 Nov
Final checks

27 to 30 Nov
Sell and monitor

From 1 Dec
Review

$14.25bn
US online spend on Cyber Monday 2025, up 7.1% (Adobe)

134.9m
US shoppers who bought online over the 2025 Thanksgiving weekend (NRF)

63%
Share of Thanksgiving Day 2026 online spend forecast to come from phones (Adobe)

R130bn+
Expected South African online retail in 2025, nearly 10% of retail (World Wide Worx)

01 Offer and pricing

- [ ] Write the offer in one sentence: what, how much off, until when.
- [ ] Check every discount against your margin after fees, shipping and returns.
- [ ] Set exact start and end times (SAST) and show them on the site.
- [ ] Only show a “was” price you have actually charged. Misleading price claims break the Consumer Protection Act.
- [ ] Decide whether codes stack with other discounts, then test it.
- [ ] Prepare a “deal ended” state so expired offers do not linger.

02 Speed and stability

- [ ] Load the home, a category, a product, the cart and checkout on a mid-range phone on mobile data.
- [ ] Run the key pages through Google PageSpeed Insights and fix the biggest warnings.
- [ ] Compress images. Nothing should be larger than it needs to be.
- [ ] Switch on page caching (not for cart and checkout) and put a CDN such as Cloudflare in front.
- [ ] Ask your host what happens at 10 times your normal traffic.
- [ ] Remove plugins and scripts you do not use. Every one adds weight.
- [ ] Set up uptime monitoring with an alert to your phone.
- [ ] Take a full backup before the change freeze.

03 Mobile first

- [ ] Buttons are easy to tap and text reads without zooming.
- [ ] Add to cart stays in reach. Banners and pop-ups never cover the product.
- [ ] Every pop-up can be closed with one tap.
- [ ] Autofill and mobile wallets (Apple Pay, Samsung Pay) work at checkout.
- [ ] Place a real order from your own phone, start to finish.

04 Product pages

- [ ] Price, saving, stock status and delivery estimate are visible without scrolling.
- [ ] Photos are clear and variant selectors (size, colour) all work.
- [ ] Titles and descriptions are specific and unique. Shoppers, Google and AI assistants all read them.
- [ ] Sold-out products say so, and offer a back-in-stock sign-up.
- [ ] Show reviews or other proof where you genuinely have it.

05 Cart and checkout

- [ ] Show the full cost, including shipping, early. Surprise costs are the top reason shoppers abandon a cart.
- [ ] Offer guest checkout. Being forced to create an account is another common reason to leave.
- [ ] Offer the payment methods your customers use: card, instant EFT, wallets.
- [ ] Test every payment method with a real small payment, then refund it.
- [ ] Order confirmation and your own order alert arrive within a minute.
- [ ] Error messages say what to fix. No dead ends.
- [ ] Check your payment provider's limits and settlement times, and tell them a spike is coming.

06 Stock, shipping and delivery

- [ ] Reconcile website stock against shelf stock. Do not oversell.
- [ ] Cap promo quantities so a hot deal cannot outrun your stock.
- [ ] Publish courier cut-off dates for delivery before Christmas.
- [ ] Quote realistic delivery times. Courier volumes slow down in peak week.
- [ ] Line up packing capacity: who packs, how many hours a day.
- [ ] State your returns policy plainly. Online sales carry a 7-day cancellation right under the ECTA.

07 Tracking and ads

- [ ] Place a test order and confirm GA4 records the purchase with the right revenue.
- [ ] Confirm your Google Ads and Meta conversion tags fire on the thank-you step.
- [ ] Tag every email, ad and social post with UTM parameters.
- [ ] Send ad traffic to the offer page, not the home page.
- [ ] Get ads approved and budgets set before the 26th. Reviews can take days.
- [ ] Build a one-page view of orders, revenue, conversion rate and average order value.

08 Email, WhatsApp and support

- [ ] Send an early-access teaser to your list 5 to 7 days before.
- [ ] Schedule the launch email. Turn on abandoned-cart emails.
- [ ] Set WhatsApp Business quick replies and an away message.
- [ ] Decide who answers customers, and when. Write answers for the five questions you get most.
- [ ] Schedule social posts for all four days, not only the first.

09 Security and legal

- [ ] Strong admin passwords, two-factor on, old users removed.
- [ ] Update your platform and plugins at least a week ahead, then stop changing things.
- [ ] Check the SSL certificate has not expired.
- [ ] Turn on 3-D Secure and your gateway's fraud rules. Watch for odd or repeated large orders.
- [ ] Privacy policy and cookie notice are current (POPIA).
- [ ] Promo terms are published: dates, "while stocks last", price-error clause.

10 During the sale (27 to 30 Nov)

- [ ] Check the site and a test checkout every few hours: morning, lunch, evening.
- [ ] Watch stock, failed payments and ad spend against your dashboard.
- [ ] Answer customers the same day.
- [ ] Keep one list of who to call: developer, host, payment provider.
- [ ] If it is not broken, do not change it.

11 After the sale (from 1 Dec)

- [ ] Export orders and reconcile them against payments.
- [ ] Send thank-you emails and ask for reviews once orders are delivered.
- [ ] Follow up buyers and abandoned carts with a Christmas offer.
- [ ] Review what sold, your margin and where traffic came from. Write down what to fix before next year.
- [ ] Take down expired banners and prices.

> The best Black Friday is a quiet one: nothing breaks, nobody oversells, and you spend the four days answering customers instead of fixing the site.

Need a hand getting your store ready?

AlphaLogic builds and fixes online stores for South African businesses. Business websites start from R4,950. Tell us what you sell and we will tell you what we would do first.

alphalogicds.com/contact

Where the numbers come from

Adobe Analytics, Cyber Monday 2025 and 2026 holiday forecast (news.adobe.com) · National Retail Federation and Prosper Insights, Thanksgiving weekend 2025 (nrf.com) · World Wide Worx, Online Retail in South Africa 2025 (worldwideworx.com) · PayFast by Network, Black Friday 2025 (payfast.io) · Baymard Institute, cart abandonment research (baymard.com).

US figures are US data. South African retailers publish their own, and no single audited national figure exists.

General guidance only. Check legal points such as the Consumer Protection Act, ECTA and POPIA against your own circumstances. Version 16 November 2026.