



The BFCM Sequence

4 Steps to Win Black Friday Before It Starts

Start the Sequence →



Letter from the Editor

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Dear reader,

This is a story about the time I saw someone set half a million dollars on fire.

Two brands spent the same \$500,000 on Black Friday ads.
One doubled revenue. The other tanked in stellar fashion.

The difference wasn't creative. Both had killer artwork. It wasn't targeting. Both had sharp media buyers. The difference was what happened after the click.

Brand A dumped every visitor on the same generic PDP they used all year. Brand B built a thoughtful acquisition and retention funnel that connected ad to experience and campaign copy. Same budget, same platform, two completely different outcomes.

It's the story every year. Most brands obsess over Meta performance and Subscriber lists like hedge fund quants, then throw all that precision into the trash with leaky funnels. It's why they start Black Friday in an **acquisition deficit**, paying inflated CPMs just to send traffic into the abyss, then slashing prices and panic-emailing to make up the difference.

The brands that win? They don't outspend. They don't out-discount. They out-sequence.

We call it the **BFCM Sequence**. Four steps, run in order:

- 1. The Paid Funnel Lead-Up** Stop bleeding clicks and align ads to storefronts before CPMs explode.
- 2. The List Build** Capture every email and phone number you can while traffic is cheap.
- 3. The Retention Play** Hit your list with segmented campaigns tied to personal storefronts.
- 4. The Follow-Up Play** Turn one-timers into repeat buyers and extend BFCM into December.

Run the Sequence now, and you'll walk into BFCM already ahead. Wait until November, and you'll be the brand sacrificing your margins at the acquisition altar.

Choose wisely.



JoAnn Martin

Chief Revenue Officer, Black Crow AI

P.S. These plays are built on our years of experience working with Shopify brands to optimize their acquisition and retention funnels. So, while we do sell software that solves some of the problems we'll talk about, this playbook is written so you can take all of our best practices without the tech. If you want the automated easy button, you **know who to call**.

The Paid Funnel Lead-Up

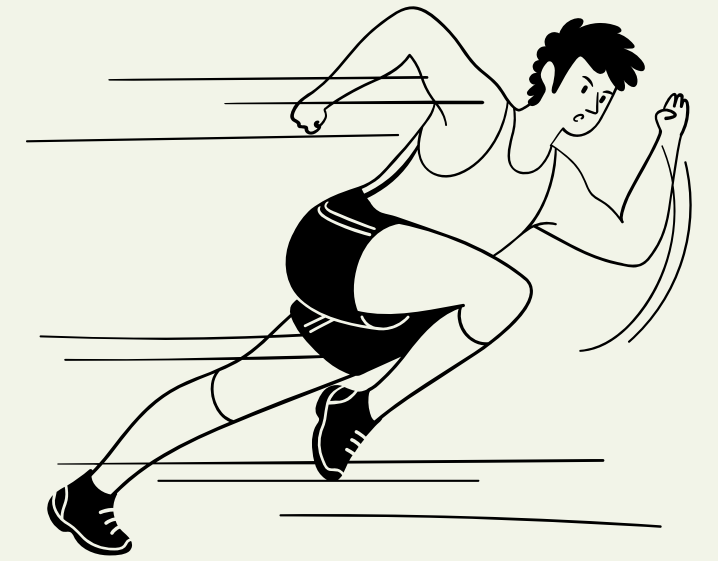
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Objective: Eliminate wasted clicks and lock in winning funnels before CPMs spike.

CPMs spike 30–50% by BFCM and everyone fights for the same audience. Win by tightening funnels now and entering with proven plays ready to scale.

Where Most Brands Slip

Here’s the reality: most brands run dialed-in ads but dump every click onto the same generic homepage, PDP, or collection. That’s the acquisition deficit. You’re paying for traffic that has no chance to convert efficiently.

- **Data point:** brands lose 20–30% CVR when clicks hit generic pages.
- **Result:** you start BFCM already in a hole, trying to outbid rising CPMs with a leaky funnel.

If you fix this now by aligning ads to storefronts, every click in September and October becomes incremental list growth and conversions

Your Playbook

Select 3 of Your Top 5 Ads

Go into Meta Ads Manager, sort by CTR over the past 30 days. These are your proven hooks you’ll build funnels from.

Map Each Ad to a Persona

Example: lifestyle UGC → loyalist/self-buyer. Gift creative → gift-giver. Offer-driven creative → deal hunter.

Define Funnel Stage

TOFU: awareness/listicle/educational.

MOFU: UGC, reviews, social proof.

BOFU: urgency/offer-focused.

Build Matching Storefronts

Above fold: headline + creative will match the ad.

Product curation: tailored to persona.

CTA: aligned to funnel stage (educate, compare, buy now).

Quick Win This Week

Not sure about the full sprint? Pick up a quick win with this abridged play.

- Duplicate your single best-performing ad.
- Build a storefront designed specifically for it.
- Split traffic 50/50 between PDP and storefront.
- Run a small fraction of your typical spend.
- If storefront lifts ATC and checkout, scale the Grid Sprint across your top 5 ads.

Why It Matters

You’re scaling proven funnels, not experiments, avoiding inflated CPMs and wasted spend.

The List Build

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Objective: Maximize list growth before CPMs peak.

By mid-October, CPMs start climbing. If you’re relying on cold traffic in November, you’re paying a premium. The only way to defend margins is to build your email and SMS lists aggressively now.

Where Most Brands Slip

- **One generic discount pop-up.**
- **Waiting until Black Friday to “blast their list.”**
- **A welcome flow with zero urgency or context.**

You’ve been sprinting to acquire loyal customers. But here’s the real question: are you capturing *all* the subscribers you could?

Your Playbook

Deploy High-Intent Pop-Ups Now

Every email and phone number you collect now becomes margin later.

Timing & Frequency: Test when the first pop-up hits and how often it shows. Layer both for balance.

Welcome Experience: Don’t just talk about your brand. After the founder note, offer a curated basket. Build a “Welcome Storefront” with browsed, abandoned, or top picks. Link your second email to it. If conversions climb, test leading with it.

Quick Win This Week

Maybe you don’t want to go full send on changing up your flows, or you’re not ready for full personalization and predictions yet. Here’s a quick win you can test this week.

- Spin up one VIP storefront gated by email capture.
- Retarget warm audiences with ads driving to that storefront.
- Sync new sign-ups into a “BFCM Early Access” list.

Why It Matters

By November, you’re hitting owned channels (free) instead of paying a ransom for every touch at inflated CPMs.

The Retention Play

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Objective: Convert your list with segmented campaigns tied to storefronts.

You're in the thick of it now. BFCM is inbox chaos. Every brand is sending discounts. If you want to cut through, your messages need to be segmented, relevant, and land on storefronts designed to convert.

Where Most Brands Slip

- They treat BFCM like a one-off cash grab.
- They don't follow up with tailored offers post-purchase.
- They miss the window where new customers are most engaged (first 14–30 days).
- They forget about repurchase dynamics on replenishable items.

Your Playbook

Segment by Persona:

Loyalists → early access.

Gift-givers → bundles + urgency.

Deal hunters → deepest discounts + countdown.

Pair Campaigns with Storefronts:

Align subject line with headline, keep offer above the fold, curate per segment.

Balance Channels:

Email = storytelling.

SMS = urgency.

Leverage UGC:

Shoppable video + reviews to build trust.

Quick Win This Week

- Draft 3 BFCM emails now: one for loyalists, one for gifters, one for deal hunters.
- Build matching storefronts for each.
- Schedule them so all you have to do in November is hit send.

Why It Matters

Retention is where margins are made. Paid ads fuel the funnel, but segmented retention campaigns + storefronts convert at scale.

The Follow-Up Play

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Objective: Turn one-time BFCM buyers into repeat customers.

The BFCM spike is worthless if those new buyers churn. You need to build structured repurchase plays in the weeks after the sale.

Where Most Brands Slip

- They send one generic blast to the full list.
- All clicks land on the same PDP or homepage.
- No continuity between campaign copy and landing experience.

Result: high open rates, low revenue per send.

Your Playbook

Post Purchase Storefronts

Capitalize on momentum with a storefront delivered right after checkout. Include browsed, saved, or cross sell items (e.g. belt → matching wallet).

Automate Flows

Build repurchase email and SMS triggers around 30 to 60 days or use predictive timing. Personalize with a thank you and product recommendations.

Repurchase and Cross Sell Storefronts

Don't just link to PDPs, curate storefronts. For VIPs, pre fill a cart with their favorites to make reordering effortless.

Quick Win This Week

All of the predictions and personalization a bit much? Here's an easy 1-2 punch to get started.

- Build one repurchase storefront tied to your top-selling product.
- Add a simple bounceback SMS triggered 7 days post-purchase driving to that storefront.

Why It Matters

Repeat buyers are how you win Q4 profitably. Post-BFCM repurchase plays extend the spike into December and Q1.

The BFCM Sequence



Lesser brands will enter Black Friday with a funnel full of holes, a bloated ad budget, and a hope that discounts alone will carry them. But not you. Now you're prepared.

The BFCM Sequence is how you stay ahead:

- 1. The Paid Funnel Lead-Up** → eliminate wasted clicks and lock in winning funnels before CPMs spike.
- 2. The List Build** → capture as many emails and SMS subscribers as possible while traffic is cheaper.
- 3. The Retention Play** → convert your list with segmented campaigns tied to persona-specific storefronts.
- 4. The Follow-Up Play** → turn BFCM spikes into long-term revenue with repurchase storefronts and bounceback offers.

If you run this in order, you're not gambling on ads when CPMs double, you're scaling proven storefronts, messaging your owned audience, and extending the holiday win into December and beyond.

Start now. If you wait until November, it's already too late.