

4 tips to prepare your small business for Black Friday

By [Ben Bierman](#), issued by [Business Partners Limited](#)

23 Nov 2023

Black Friday, one of the world's most anticipated shopping events on the calendar, is just around the corner. For major retailers, this is the time of year to grab the attention of bargain-hunters, early-bird festive gift shoppers and individuals on the lookout for self-care spoils. With some careful planning and strategic thinking, local small businesses can also get in on the action.

This year, in light of rising inflationary pressures and the cost-of-living crisis, many South Africans are feeling the pinch of the economic downturn. One of the major knock-on effects of these financial realities is that the consumer market has become highly competitive. On Black Friday, in particular, almost every brand and business across the country will be vying for the attention of consumers.

There's no doubt about it, in a market flooded with multiple marketing messages, the competition will be stiff. To get ahead, small businesses need to perfect the basics, look for strategic opportunities or gaps in the market and focus on what they do best – problem-solving.

These four tips are a great place to start.



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1. Leverage customer loyalty

One of the major benefits of having an event like Black Friday is the ability to use the day to strengthen your database. You could consider incentivising potential customers to sign-up to your newsletter or promotional material ahead of Black Friday to 'unlock' early access to your deals and promotions. If communicated clearly and with enough enthusiasm, this could lead to the onboarding of new customers. It's also a great opportunity to offer your existing subscribers real value – a strategy that could in turn help you optimise customer retention. Whether your growing database converts into actual sales on Black Friday or not, if you use the day to gain a bigger following, you'll have a larger customer pool to dip into at a later stage.

2. Small Business Saturday

An encouraging trend that has taken shape overseas is Small Business Saturday. In countries like America, the Saturday after Black Friday is dedicated to small businesses and to driving interest in buying from local entrepreneurs. In South Africa, this trend has not yet taken off, which means that entrepreneurs who can get off the starting block early will have the added advantage of playing in an arena that is not yet saturated.

You could choose to hold off on sales and promotions until Small Business Saturday or sweeten the deal by hosting a customer welcoming event at your store or use social media to run competitions and giveaways. This is also the ideal time to disseminate marketing messages that speak to the need to support small-scale artisans, more sustainable local producers and proudly South African brands.

3. Get the price right

A number of factors have placed many South Africans under undue financial strain. The ongoing energy crisis, consistent food and fuel price hikes, high unemployment and the increased cost of borrowing means that South Africans are more price-sensitive than ever. But while this represents a hurdle, it can also be seen as an opportunity.

As a small business, you may be in a better position to offer value in ways that larger companies can't. For example, you

could target cost-conscious consumers with bundled product deals, free delivery or free gifts with purchases.

You could also consider partnering with other small businesses to offer group deals and create opportunities to up-sell your products in a way that is commercially viable for all parties involved. This Black Friday, getting the price right will be vital, so keep a close eye on competitors and make sure that your products or services are priced attractively.

4. Spotlight on e-commerce

With more shoppers opting to shop online, ensuring that your website is optimised for sales and lead generation is important in the lead up to Black Friday. It may be useful to do an audit of your website in preparation for larger volumes of traffic.

Aspects to consider include page loading speed, the quality of product images, ease of access to Black Friday deals, a clear call-to-action to shop or become a subscriber and error-free written content.

It's also important to remember that with greater mobile penetration across the country, many South Africans will be shopping using mobile devices, so make sure your mobile website provides a seamless, glitch-free experience from deal discovery to checkout.

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