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That Friday feeling: How retailers can win Black Friday

Last year's Black Friday smashed records, with the largest-ever day for online sales. Here's how UK retailers can prepare for 2015's big event.

This year's Black Friday should be more popular than a white Christmas. Last year it was the UK's biggest ecommerce shopping day on record; it was also the biggest driver of online retail searches, accounting for 59% over the festive period. The good news is that Black Friday demand is predicted to be even bigger in 2015 – but it's vital for marketers to be properly prepared.

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Black Friday knocks out Boxing Day

In 2014, Black Friday was also the biggest ecommerce shopping day on record. Black Friday online sales shot up by 74% YoY to reach an astonishing £810m: Christmas certainly came early for online retailers.



And now this year's Black Friday – November 27th – is coming up fast. Consumers are raring to snap up bargains and tick off their shopping lists, while brands are anxious to make sure they get a healthy slice of the Black Friday pie.

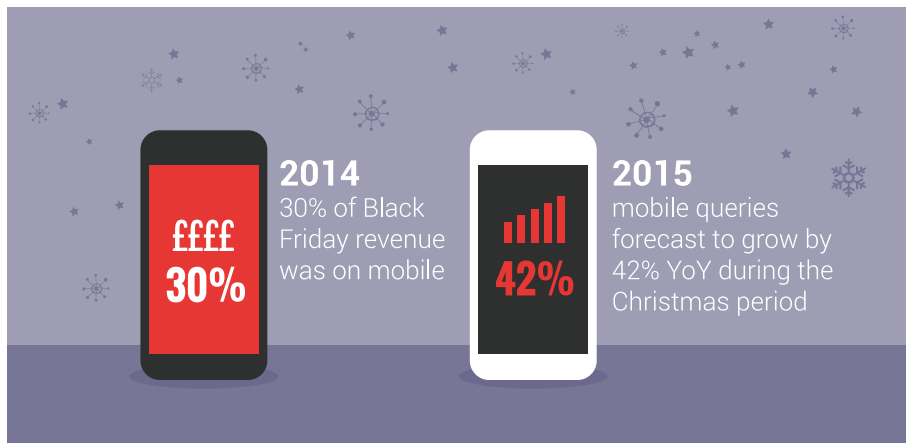
Get ready right now

But brands need to be braced for this surge in demand. Last year, search queries in Black Friday Week rocketed by 273% YoY – but queries saw ad depth drop as advertisers were unable to handle their heavy online traffic.^[1] Ad depth is the number of advertisers showing up in search results for a given query.

What's more, marketers need to prepare right now. Online search interest for Christmas starts earlier every year, and Black Friday research online begins a full

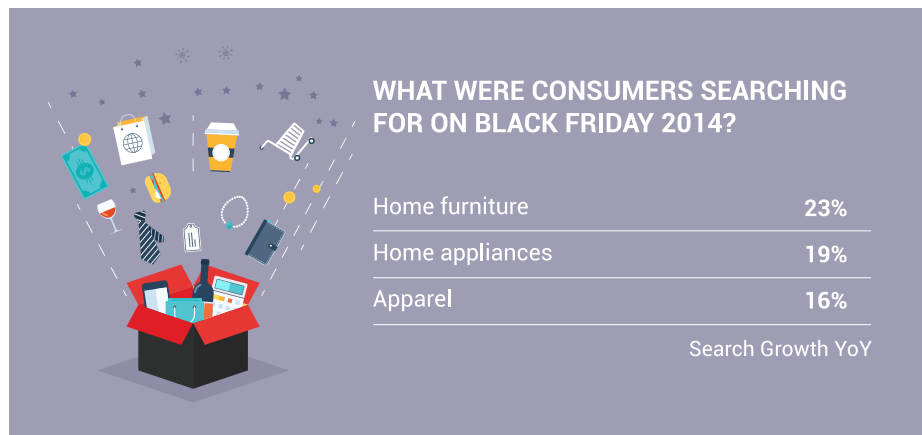
three weeks before the big day.^[2] To seize all the opportunities of the biggest day in online retail sales, it's essential to get in early.

It's also crucial to capture mobile demand: 31% of retail queries on Black Friday 2014 were on smartphones (an increase of 81% YoY), while almost 50% of web traffic and close to 30% of revenue was on mobile. Furthermore, mobile queries are forecast to jump by 42% YoY during this year's Christmas period.^[1]



What's on their wishlists?

Here's what consumers were searching for this time last year. And whatever's hot in 2015, search growth is likely see a similar leap this coming Black Friday Week.



Categories seeing a YoY rise in queries last year included apparel (16%), with all growth coming from smartphones; home appliances (19%), with queries peaking on Black Friday; and home furniture (23%), with smartphones accounting for 33% of queries.^[1]

It's all in the timing

Timing is critical, so marketers need to look at their key categories and find the best time to advertise them. For example, perfume and jewellery queries peak the week of Black Friday and decline after Cyber Monday. ^[1]

Even the time of day is important: there were more apparel queries between 5am and 12pm on Black Friday compared with a normal Friday, as early birds sought to pounce on the best clothing deals.^[3]



Tips for a sparkling Black Friday

Just like Halloween, Black Friday is an American tradition that has crossed the pond and been enthusiastically embraced by the Brits. Now, as consumers get ready to get full value from the event, it's time for marketers to do the same. Focusing on mobile search, fine-tuning their timing and making sure their site can cope with demand should ensure a sparkling Black Friday.

Top questions around black friday asked in UK^[4]:

- when is black friday
- what is black friday
- what time does black friday start
- how much discount on black friday
- what shops do black friday
- how much are tvs on black friday
- how much will an xbox one be on black friday

Top 5 UK cities trending for the keyword “Black Friday” in the past 90 days^[4]:

1. Birmingham
2. Nottingham
3. Bristol
4. Liverpool
5. Manchester

Sources:

1: Google Internal Data.

2: Google Internal Data, based on searches for a bucket of top 'Black Friday' related search terms.

3: Google Internal Data, Regular Friday is the average query volume for the 4 Fridays before Black Friday 2014.

4: Google Trends dashboard for cities and internal Google data for top questions.