

Black Friday 2026 Checklist

4 Ways to Optimize Your E-Commerce Enterprise Strategy

It's that time of year again: **Black Friday is upon us**. If you're short on prep time, we're here to help. Here are 4 ways to optimize your storefront's performance for Black Friday and any other high-traffic sales event that comes your way. We'll cover actionable ways to apply each strategy, whether you have 5 minutes, 5 hours, or 5 days.



1 Get in step with the AI-era shopper

You're probably not shocked to see AI on a checklist these days. But, at risk of preaching to the choir, AI is here to stay. Shoppers are already using it to find you, compare you, and in some cases, buy for you. Meeting them there is no longer optional, but fortunately, most of the fixes are within reach before the big day arrives.

5 MINUTES

Add FAQ-style Q&A, clear pricing and availability language, and product/offer schema to your top 10 Black Friday product detail pages (PDPs). This is the simplest way to help AI agents surface accurate stock, product, and price info.

5 HOURS

Run a keyword-intent and GEO review across your highest-traffic category and product pages. Check that titles, descriptions, and specs match how shoppers actually phrase AI queries, not just your legacy SEO terms.

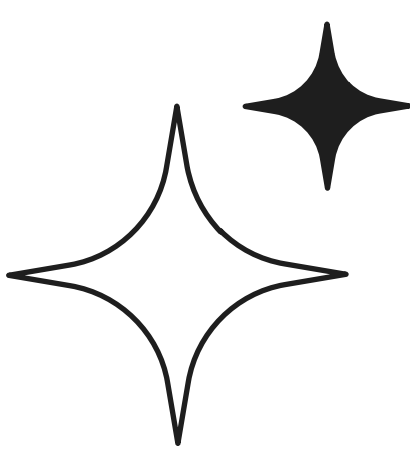
5 DAYS

Set up a way to monitor your AI visibility: track referral traffic coming from AI platforms, and test whether an AI assistant actually surfaces your top Black Friday deals when asked. Fix what's missing (schema, pricing clarity, stock accuracy) before the event, not after.

Data sources: *Salesforce (Cyber Week 2025 data); Adobe Analytics via Forbes; Menlo (2026: The State of Consumer AI data).*

DATA FROM THE GROUND

- **\$14.2 billion** in global Black Friday online sales was driven by AI agents.
- **805%** increase in AI-driven traffic to US retail sites compared to the previous Black Friday.
- **50%** of shoppers use AI to compare prices, **43%** to narrow a shortlist, **37%** to make a final purchase decision, and **26%** let AI complete the purchase outright.



2 Prioritize security, especially during peak periods

Any security incident, from data leaks to attack-induced downtime, can be catastrophic for your reputation and revenue. But on Black Friday, that risk is amplified: not only is your website in the spotlight, but it's also handling huge traffic spikes. The slightest crack in your armor can lead to upset customers, lost potential sales, and damage to your reputation. Now is the time to lock down your infrastructure.

5 MINUTES

Check whether your checkout, payment gateway, and inventory-facing systems have any critical security patches pending or overdue. Most platforms show this on a single admin/dashboard screen. If updates are outstanding, flag them to your IT team as a priority; implementing security patches and upgrades is one of the most effective ways to secure your system.

5 HOURS

List out every system your checkout process touches: login, payment, inventory checks, loyalty points. For each one, check whether it's protected against bots and automated attacks.

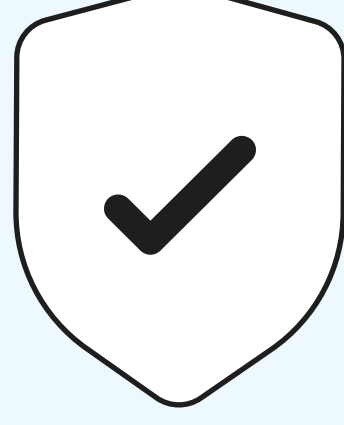
5 DAYS

Support your IT team in launching a full, comprehensive vulnerability scan and cybersecurity assessment—including a credential-stuffing and card-testing exercise—and separately, stress-test your checkout flow's infrastructure under simulated Black Friday load to confirm it can process peak payment volumes.

Data sources: *Akamai (Securing the Agentic Storefront report); Akamai (2026 API Security Impact Study); ITIC (2025 Hourly Cost of Downtime Survey).*

DATA FROM THE GROUND

- The median enterprise outage now costs **\$9,000** per minute.
- Commerce faced nearly **3 trillion** Layer 7 DDoS attacks last year, with the retail vertical absorbing **84%** of that volume.
- **85%** of commerce companies experienced at least one API-related security incident in the past year, yet only **22%** knew which of their APIs were exposed.



3 Double down on workflow efficiency

Inefficiency undermines e-commerce operations every day, but it's especially costly when there's a narrow window to get pricing, content, and promotions live before the traffic hits. The tools available for closing that gap have changed fast, and agents are now doing real work inside workflows, not just running fixed automation rules.

5 MINUTES

Score a quick efficiency win by leveraging basic automation you may already have in your ecosystem: scheduled content or promo publishing, auto-tagging, or a QA agent that flags missing images or broken links before go-live.

5 HOURS

Identify one handoff point between merchandising or marketing and developers where an agent could take over the repetitive step, such as validating bulk content updates before they're pushed live. This is where cracks show under the Black Friday load.

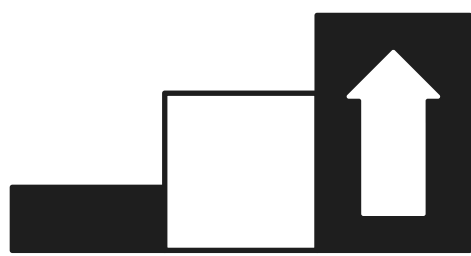
5 DAYS

Launch an efficiency sprint. Identify the worst bottlenecks slowing down content delivery, figure out which are realistic to improve before Black Friday, and work with your team to iron out as many wrinkles as possible.

Data sources: *McKinsey (Agents for growth: Turning AI promise into impact); McKinsey (The state of AI in 2026).*

DATA FROM THE GROUND

- Up to **40%** of enterprise applications will include integrated task-specific AI agents by the end of 2026, up from less than **5%** in 2025.
- **40%** of large organizations report scaling AI agents, up **27%** from last year, while smaller organizations have stayed at **22%**.
- Scaled agent deployments in marketing and sales can lift productivity **3–5%** annually and, in some cases, lift growth by **10%** or more.



4 Centralize your touchpoints

Shoppers now reach your products through more paths than ever: your storefront, your app, marketplaces, social commerce, AI shopping agents, you name it. Keeping pricing, stock, and copy in sync across all of them is harder than it used to be, and the cost of getting it wrong shows up fast, turning sales into abandoned carts.

5 MINUTES

Create a checklist of all the channels you'll use to push Black Friday content and note who's responsible for updates. This gives you immediate visibility on major players and helps you start taking note of how well they're working together in your current setup.

5 HOURS

List all planned recurring Black Friday changes: price drops, stock alerts, promo banners. Build a single cloud-based hub for that data, even if it's a shared source of truth rather than full centralization yet.

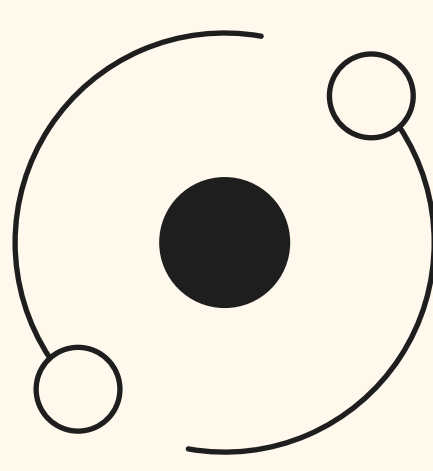
5 DAYS

Start evaluating what a headless CMS would need to solve for you: map out where your product content and catalog data currently live, where the sync breaks down most, and what "centralized" would actually need to mean for your team. Use that to build a shortlist of vendors to look into properly after the event.

Data sources: *Salesforce (Cyber Week 2025 data); Sendtrix; Deloitte (Milliseconds Make Millions research).*

DATA FROM THE GROUND

- **70%** of Black Friday and Cyber Monday online orders globally were done on mobile devices.
- The average online cart abandonment rate sits at **76.8%**, and mobile abandons at a meaningfully higher rate than desktop.
- A mobile site speed improvement of just **0.1 seconds** increased retail conversions by **8.4%** and average order value by **9.2%**.



Black Friday is only the beginning

Black Friday is a crucial sales event, and the same optimizations carry your business through the rest of the year too. An AI-fluent, security-hardened, agent-powered storefront that centralizes its catalog becomes the foundation for commerce experiences that never miss a beat, well beyond one weekend.

How ready is your storefront for Black Friday?

Answer a few honest questions about your tech and your team. In two minutes, you'll get your Black Friday Readiness score, plus practical, ungated resources to prepare for the sales season ahead.

[Get Your Score](#)