FREE GUIDE • VIREXO MEDIA

The Q4 Prep Playbook

5 phases to your biggest Black Friday yet. What to fix, build, and launch from July to BFCM week — so November runs itself.

Why this guide exists

Virexo Media is an ecommerce growth agency for D2C and Shopify brands — we build, design, and market stores that turn traffic into revenue. This guide is for founders and marketers who want Q4 to be their biggest quarter without the November panic.

> *Q4 drives an estimated 30–40% of annual revenue for many ecommerce brands (industry benchmark). Black Friday 2026 is November 27. The stores that win it start now — because the things that break under BFCM load can't be fixed under BFCM load.*

Work the five phases below in order. Each is a checklist you can actually finish. Dates assume a late-November BFCM; shift them if your peak differs.

PHASE 1 • JULY – AUGUST

Fix the foundation (what can't be fixed under load)

- ✓ **Speed audit:** run PageSpeed Insights on home, top collection, and top product page. Compress images, cut unused apps, lazy-load below the fold. Mobile first — that's where most Q4 traffic lands.
- ✓ **Mobile checkout walk-through:** buy from your own store on a phone. Note every point of friction; kill one per week.
- ✓ **Product page audit:** benefit-led titles, 5+ photos per hero product, visible reviews, shipping/returns answered on-page.
- ✓ **SEO groundwork:** fix duplicate titles, thin descriptions, and broken links now — rankings earned in summer pay out in November.
- ✓ **Baseline your numbers:** record current conversion rate, AOV, and email revenue share so you can measure the lift.

PHASE 2 • AUGUST – EARLY SEPTEMBER

Build the list you'll sell to

- ✓ Launch a real lead magnet (gift guide, sizing quiz, early-access waitlist) — not just "10% off."
- ✓ Add SMS opt-in at checkout and on the popup's second step.
- ✓ Start an "early access" VIP segment: people who ask to hear about your BFCM deal first. They become day-one buyers.
- ✓ Post consistently on 1–2 organic channels feeding the list — every subscriber added now is nearly free Q4 revenue later.

PHASE 3 • SEPTEMBER

Automate the selling + lock inventory

- ✓ Build or tune the five core email flows: welcome, abandoned checkout, browse abandonment, post-purchase, win-back.
- ✓ Order best-seller inventory with 8+ weeks of lead time (a widely-cited benchmark) — Q4 manufacturing and freight delays are the norm, not the exception.
- ✓ Decide your BFCM offer architecture now: sitewide %, tiered spend-more-save-more, bundles, or gift-with-purchase. Model the margin at realistic volume.
- ✓ Stress-test fulfillment: who packs what when orders 3x? Write the plan down.

PHASE 4 • OCTOBER

Test creative while attention is cheap

- ✓ Launch ad creative tests in early October — CPMs climb hard into November, so buy your learning at the low price, not the peak price.
- ✓ Find 2–3 winning hooks/angles and bank them; you'll scale only proven creative during BFCM.
- ✓ Build the BFCM landing page(s) now: offer, countdown, best-sellers, trust signals. Slow pages lose the click.
- ✓ Draft the full email/SMS calendar for Nov 1 – Dec 1: teaser, early access, launch, reminders, last call, Cyber Monday pivot.

PHASE 5 • NOVEMBER

Launch the sequence — then execute, don't improvise

- ✓ Week 1–2: warm up — teasers, VIP early-access signups, gift guides in content and ads.
- ✓ Week 3: open early access to the VIP list before the public launch.
- ✓ BFCM week (Nov 27–30): scale proven ads, send the planned sends, monitor site speed daily, staff support for fast replies.
- ✓ Dec 1: switch messaging to shipping-deadline urgency — the season isn't over at Cyber Monday.

5 mistakes that quietly ruin Q4

Starting in October. Inventory lead times and email-list growth can't be compressed. October starters compete on discounts alone.

Discounting without an offer architecture. A flat 20% trains buyers to wait. Tiers, bundles, and GWP protect margin and lift AOV.

Testing creative during BFCM. Peak CPMs are for scaling winners, not for finding them.

Ignoring the phone. If mobile checkout has friction in July, it has a queue of abandoned carts in November.

Treating email as an announcement channel. The flows you build in September sell all season — on autopilot — while campaigns spike.

What good looks like (illustrative example)

Hypothetical, for illustration: a Shopify store doing $40k/mo starts Phase 1 in July. By November it has a faster mobile site, 6,000 new subscribers, five live flows, and two proven ad hooks. During BFCM it scales only winning creative and sends a pre-planned sequence to a warm list — instead of discounting harder, it converts better. That's the compounding effect of starting 18 weeks early: every phase multiplies the next one.