



20 last-minute BFCM email & SMS hacks that take an afternoon

Black Friday is a few weeks out. Here's what to do right now to squeeze every last bit of revenue out of your email and SMS this year, with the tools you already have.

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READ THIS FIRST

The sale is mostly decided before it starts

Black Friday is a few weeks out, and it's the one week a year when your list is worth more per name than any ad account you run. If October went on the offer and the creative, you're about to find out that the list hasn't been warmed up, the welcome flow still says "here's 10% off", and the SMS program has 4,000 numbers nobody has texted since July. There's still time to fix all of it. Every hack in here is something you can do in an afternoon with the tools you already have, ordered by when to do it, so you squeeze every last bit out of email and SMS this year. Start at the top and work down.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- **Each hack has a time estimate**, and most are under an hour. Do the fast ones first.
- **Four parts, in calendar order**: two weeks out, the week of, the weekend itself, and the week after.
- **Copy you can steal is in the grey boxes**. Change the product and the number, then send it.
- **If you only have one afternoon**, do the six hacks marked "start here". They're the ones that move the number most.

Get the list ready before you get the creative ready

Everybody's building the Black Friday email right now. Almost nobody's checking whether it'll land in the inbox. These six take about a day between them and they're worth more than any subject line.

01

Build the early-access list with one click

[START HERE](#)

DO THIS

Send one email to everyone who's opened or clicked in the last 90 days. One line of copy, one button: "Yes, put me on the early access list." Tag everyone who clicks. That tag is your VIP segment for the whole weekend, and it's self-selected, which is the point.

TIME

45 minutes

WHY IT WORKS

Clicking is a commitment. The people who raise their hand convert at roughly two to three times the rest of the list on launch day, and you've just warmed up your sending domain with a high-engagement send two weeks before the big one.

STEAL THIS

Subject: Want in early?

Preview: Black Friday starts a day early for a few people

We're opening Black Friday 24 hours early for a small group. No catch. Tap below and you're on the list.

[Put me on the list]

02

Swap the popup headline for the next six weeks

[START HERE](#)

DO THIS

Change your site popup to a Black Friday early-access offer with an SMS field. "Get Black Friday deals before everyone else" beats "10% off your first order" every November. Keep the discount on the second step, where you ask for the phone number.

TIME

30 minutes

WHY IT WORKS

Site traffic climbs in November and buyers are already in research mode. A BFCM-specific popup opts in at about double the rate of the generic one, and every number you collect now is a text you can send at 7am on Friday.

03

Send only to engaged for the next two weeks

DO THIS

For every campaign until Thanksgiving, send to people who've opened or clicked in the last 120 days and nobody else. Run one re-engagement email to the 120-to-365 day group with a real reason to click (the early-access invite from hack 01 works), and let that email decide who comes back in.

TIME

20 minutes per send

WHY IT WORKS

Inbox providers watch your engagement rate hardest in the weeks before you spike volume. A clean two-week run of high-open sends is how your Black Friday email lands in the primary tab instead of promotions, or worse.

04

Put a Black Friday branch in the welcome and cart flows

[START HERE](#)

DO THIS

Add a conditional split at the top of your welcome flow: if today is between November 20 and December 1, send the BFCM version. That version says "you got here at the right time, the sale is live, here's the link" and skips the standard first-purchase discount. Do the same in the cart flow: swap the "here's 10% off" email for "the sale price is already in your cart, and it ends Monday."

TIME

[An hour for both](#)

WHY IT WORKS

A new subscriber who gets "welcome, here's 10% off" on Black Friday while the site says 30% off is confused, and the confused ones leave. The split takes an hour and runs itself.

05

Pause the discount flows that'll stack

DO THIS

Write down every automated discount that fires on its own: win-back, sunset, browse abandonment, birthday. Decide for each one whether it pauses from November 24 to December 2 or switches to the sale message. Pause is the right answer for most of them.

TIME

[30 minutes](#)

WHY IT WORKS

A win-back code on top of a sitewide sale is margin you didn't plan to give away, and a customer who gets a 20% win-back email an hour after the 30% sale email thinks you're disorganized.

Clean up SMS compliance before the volume goes up

DO THIS

Confirm quiet hours are set to 8am to 9pm in the subscriber's time zone, not yours. Send yourself a test and reply STOP to check the opt-out works. Check that your SMS welcome message includes the business name and "msg & data rates may apply". Then verify your toll-free or 10DLC registration is approved, because unregistered traffic gets filtered in November.

TIME

30 minutes

WHY IT WORKS

Carriers filter harder in Q4, and a complaint spike on Black Friday can get a number blocked for the weekend. Thirty minutes now is cheap next to a dead channel on Friday.

Build anticipation without burning the list

The week before Black Friday is for telling people what's coming and when, so that by the time the email lands on Friday morning they've already decided. Three sends, none of them hard, plus one hour of prep that pays for itself all weekend.

07

Monday: show the actual deal

START HERE

DO THIS

One email that shows the real products and the real discount, with the date and time it starts, and nothing held back for a reveal. Add a "set a reminder" button that links to a calendar file, or a "reply YES and we'll text you when it's live" line for SMS.

TIME

An hour

WHY IT WORKS

Buyers plan Black Friday. The brands that show the deal early get put on the shortlist, and the ones who "reveal" on Friday are competing against a full inbox with no head start. The reminder button also hands you a clean segment to text first.

08

Wednesday: open early access for the VIP tag

DO THIS

Send the early-access list from hack 01 a plain email on Wednesday: "It's open for you. Everyone else gets it Friday." Text the SMS VIPs the same thing at 10am.

TIME

45 minutes

WHY IT WORKS

Early access pulls revenue forward into a day with no competition, and it shows you which products will sell out so you can swap the hero in Friday's email.

STEAL THIS

Subject: It's open for you

Preview: A day before everyone else

Black Friday prices are live on the site right now, and they're only live for the people on this list. Everyone else gets the email Friday morning. Go first.

[Shop early access]

09

Thanksgiving: one short email, plain text, no sale

DO THIS

Thursday, 9am. Plain text from the founder. Two or three sentences of thanks, one line that says the sale opens tomorrow at 7am, and no product grid.

TIME

20 minutes

WHY IT WORKS

Thursday inboxes are close to empty, and the people who open on Thursday are the people who'll open on Friday. A real note on a quiet day gets replies, and replies are the strongest deliverability signal there is.

ONE HOUR OF PREP: WRITE EVERY SUBJECT LINE NOW

Write every subject line and preheader for the weekend before Friday: launch, evening send, resend, Saturday, Sunday, Cyber Monday, last call, and the extension. Put them in one doc.

Nobody writes a good subject line at 6pm on Black Friday with a Slack thread on fire, and the resends only happen if the subject line already exists. The swipe file at the back of this guide gets you most of the way.

PART 3 · THE WEEKEND · 10-16

Send more than feels polite

The most common Black Friday mistake is sending once a day because you're worried about unsubscribes. The people who'd leave over three emails on Black Friday were never going to buy, and the people who buy are reading everything.

10

Two sends on Friday, two on Cyber Monday

START HERE

DO THIS

Friday 7am: the launch email, to the full list. Friday 6pm: "what's selling" to everyone who didn't click the morning email, with a different subject line. Same pattern on Cyber Monday. Saturday and Sunday get one email each.

TIME

Already written, if you did the prep hour

WHY IT WORKS

The people who were waiting for the sale open the morning send. The evening send is for everyone else, who needed a reason first, and "the best-selling color is almost gone" is a reason.

11

Resend to non-openers 20 hours later with a new subject line

DO THIS

Any campaign that matters gets resent to non-openers the next day. Give it a new subject line and preheader with a different angle, because "ICYMI" bolted onto the old subject is the same email to the people who already skipped it.

TIME

10 minutes per resend

WHY IT WORKS

A resend to non-openers adds roughly 30% to a campaign's revenue at the cost of a handful of unsubscribes. Most brands skip the subject-line swap, and that's where the extra revenue comes from.

12

Shorten every abandonment delay

DO THIS

Cart abandonment: first email at 30 minutes instead of 1 to 4 hours. SMS cart reminder at 1 hour. Browse abandonment at 2 hours. Change the copy to "the sale price is already in your cart" and add the end time. Set it all back the following Tuesday.

TIME

30 minutes

WHY IT WORKS

On a normal Tuesday a cart sits for a day, but on Black Friday the customer has six tabs open and the first brand back wins. A faster trigger with the deadline in the copy converts at about double the normal flow.

13

SMS only at the moments email is slow

DO THIS

Three texts over the weekend to the full SMS list: Friday at launch, Sunday evening ("Cyber Monday is tomorrow, and it's the last day"), and Monday night ("ends at midnight"). Add a fourth text, Monday afternoon, to people who clicked but didn't buy. Every text has a link and an end time.

TIME**30 minutes****WHY IT WORKS**

SMS gets read inside three minutes, and email gets read when someone gets around to it. Save the texts for when the three minutes matter: launch, and the last hours. Past four texts to the full list in four days, the opt-outs cost more than the extra orders.

14

Saturday: the plain-text "what's left" email

DO THIS

Saturday, 10am, from the founder, plain text. Three things that sold out (name them), three things still in stock that are worth it, and a line about why. One link.

TIME

30 minutes

WHY IT WORKS

Saturday is the slowest day of the four and the inbox is full of design-heavy sale emails. A plain-text email from a person stands out on sight, and naming what sold out is the most believable scarcity you'll ever write, because it's true.

STEAL THIS

Subject: what sold out (and what didn't)

Quick one from me. The [product] in [color] sold out by lunch yesterday, the [product] went by dinner, and we're down to the last few [product]. Still in stock and worth your time: [product], [product], and [product], all still at the sale price through Monday. Here's the link. [link]

[Founder name]

15

Sunday: the gift guide, split by what they spend

DO THIS

Three versions of one gift guide email: under \$50, under \$100, and "the good stuff", sent by average order value. If you don't have AOV segments, send the under-\$50 version to everyone who's never bought and the other two to customers.

TIME

An hour

WHY IT WORKS

Sunday is when people shop for other people. A gift guide that matches what the reader has already spent gets more clicks than a generic one, and it gives you a non-discount reason to send on a day when everyone else is yelling "40% off".

16

Cyber Monday: move "last chance" to the evening send

DO THIS

Monday 7am: the Cyber Monday email with something new (a bonus gift, a lower free-shipping threshold, one fresh product). Monday 6pm: "ends at midnight" to everyone, including people who already bought. Text the whole list at 8pm.

TIME

Already written

WHY IT WORKS

The last four hours of a sale do about a fifth of the sale. Most brands send the "ends tonight" email at 7am, when nobody feels the deadline yet.

Where the easy money hides

The sale ends Monday at midnight, and most brands go dark until the shipping-cutoff email. That's the week your new customers are paying the most attention they will ever pay you.

17 The extension, only if it's true

DO THIS

If stock and margin allow, extend 24 hours on Tuesday for people who clicked but didn't buy: "we're keeping it open for you until midnight". Segment it. Don't send it to the full list.

TIME

30 minutes

WHY IT WORKS

To the clickers it reads as a favor. The full list reads it as proof the deadline was fake, and every deadline you set after that is worth less.

18

Build the Black Friday buyer flow

[START HERE](#)

DO THIS

Everyone who bought between November 25 and December 2 goes into a short flow. Day 1: shipping reality, what to expect in the busiest week of the year. Day 5: how to use it, or a "you picked well" note. Day 12: the gift-shipping cutoff with a cross-sell. No discount in any of them.

TIME

90 minutes

WHY IT WORKS

A Black Friday buyer who hears nothing after the receipt is a one-time buyer. The first-to-second purchase window is about 30 days, so the flow has to exist before December starts.

19

Shipping cutoff countdown, email and SMS

DO THIS

Decide the last day to order for Christmas delivery. Email it three times: a week before, two days before, and the morning of. One text the morning of. Lead with the date in the subject line.

TIME

An hour

WHY IT WORKS

The cutoff is the most honest urgency of the whole quarter, and most brands send it once, in a footer. The morning-of email is the highest-revenue non-sale send in December for most of the brands we've looked at.

20

Tag the Black Friday buyers and the discount-only crowd

DO THIS

Create two segments before you forget: "bought during BFCM 2026" and "has only ever bought on a discount". The first one is your early-access list for next year. The second one gets suppressed from full-price launches in January.

TIME

20 minutes

WHY IT WORKS

Next October you'll want to know who buys on Black Friday, and in January you'll want to stop sending full-price launches to people who've never paid full price. Twenty minutes now covers both.

The whole week on one page

Change the number and the product. Every subject line has a preheader because the preheader is the second half of the subject line, and most brands leave it on the default.

THE BFCM WEEK SEND CALENDAR

DAY	EMAIL	SMS
Mon Nov 23	"Here's what's going on sale" preview, engaged list	none
Tue Nov 24	Resend the preview to non-openers, new subject line	none
Wed Nov 25	Early access, VIP tag only	10am early access, SMS VIPs only
Thu Nov 26	9am plain-text thanks from the founder, no sale	none
Fri Nov 27	7am launch to all. 6pm "what's selling" to non-clickers	7am launch to all
Sat Nov 28	10am plain-text "what sold out", all	none
Sun Nov 29	10am gift guide, split by AOV	6pm "tomorrow's the last day", all
Mon Nov 30	7am Cyber Monday to all. 6pm "ends at midnight" to all	3pm clicked-but-didn't-buy. 8pm last call, all
Tue Dec 1	Extension, clickers only, if it's true	none

Resend rule for the whole week: any email that matters goes back out to non-openers about 20 hours later with a new subject line.

SUBJECT LINES TO STEAL

SEND	SUBJECT	PREHEADER
Preview, Mon	Here's what's going on sale Friday	Prices, products, and the exact time it opens
Early access, Wed	It's open for you	A day before everyone else
Thanksgiving	Happy Thanksgiving from [founder]	No sale in this one, just a thank you
Launch, Fri 7am	It's live	30% off everything, no code, through Monday
Launch, alternate	The sale you asked about	Open now, ends Monday night
Evening, Fri 6pm	Three things are almost gone	The best sellers from this morning
Resend, Sat	In case Friday got away from you	The sale runs through Monday
Plain text, Sat	what sold out (and what didn't)	leave blank, it's plain text
Gift guide, Sun	Gifts under \$50 that don't look it	Picked by us, priced for the sale
Cyber Monday, 7am	One more thing for Cyber Monday	Everything from the weekend, plus [bonus]
Last call, Mon 6pm	Ends at midnight	Then the prices go back
Extension, Tue	We kept it open for you	Until midnight tonight, then it's done
Shipping cutoff	Order by [day] for Christmas	After that we can't promise the 24th

TEXTS TO STEAL

Early access

[Brand]: You're in early. Black Friday prices are open for you right now, a day before everyone else. [link]

Launch

[Brand]: Black Friday is live. 30% off sitewide, no code needed, through Monday. [link]

Sunday evening

[Brand]: Tomorrow's the last day. Cyber Monday ends the sale at midnight. [link]

Clicked, didn't buy

[Brand]: Your cart still has the sale price on it. That stops at midnight. [link]

Last call

[Brand]: Last call. The sale ends tonight at midnight and prices go back up Tuesday. [link]

Shipping cutoff

[Brand]: Today's the last day to order for delivery by December 24. [link]

Every text needs the brand name at the front, a link, and an end time. Opt-out language goes on the welcome message and periodically after that, per your platform's compliance settings.

BEFORE YOU CLOSE THIS

If you only do three things

THE SHORT LIST

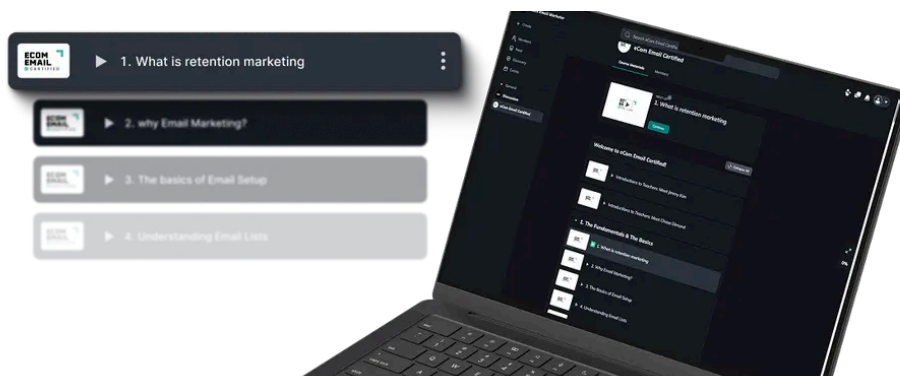
- **Do hacks 01, 02, and 04 this week.** The early-access tag, the popup swap, and the flow branches are the three things that change the number most, and they take an afternoon.
- **Send twice on Friday and twice on Monday.** The evening send is the one most brands skip, and it's the one that pays for the rest.
- **Build the buyer flow before December starts.** Everything you do after the sale is worth more than the extra 5% off you were about to add to the offer.

THE ONE-LINE RULE

Every email and text this weekend needs a link and an end time, and anything missing one of them isn't ready to send.

ONE MORE THING

Black Friday is one week. The course is the other 51.



Everything in this guide is a shortcut, and shortcuts work best when you already know the long way. **eCom Email Certified** is the long way, taught properly: 175+ lessons on flows, campaigns, segmentation, deliverability, AI, and copywriting, built by the two of us from the programs we run for real brands.

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