

HOLIDAY · BLACK FRIDAY · CYBER MONDAY

The Holiday Retail Media Audit Checklist

33 checks to run before the holiday season, so your retail media budget works harder when every click costs more.

Brands

Sellers

Retail media buyers

E-commerce teams

Mark the calendar.

- **Thu, Nov 26** Thanksgiving. Cyber Week starts.
- **Fri, Nov 27** Black Friday
- **Sat, Nov 28** Small Business Saturday
- **Mon, Nov 30** Cyber Monday
- **December** Last-shipping-day push. Check each retailer's cutoff.

HOW TO USE THIS

Check every item you can confirm today. Count your checks and score yourself at the end.

01

Budget & pacing

The fastest way to lose Black Friday is to run out of budget by 10 a.m.

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- ☐ **Peak-day budgets are raised** so campaigns don't cap out mid-morning.
 - ☐ **A flex reserve is set aside** to shift toward what's working during Cyber Week.
 - ☐ **Pacing has a named owner** who checks it at least twice a day on peak days.
 - ☐ **Spend is planned past Cyber Monday**, through shipping cutoffs and post-holiday gift card shoppers.
 - ☐ **Low-margin SKUs have spend caps** so volume doesn't outrun profit.
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02

Retail readiness

Ads can't fix a product page that won't convert.

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- ☐ **Hero SKUs have inventory for peak**, and ads pause if they go out of stock.
 - ☐ **Product pages are holiday-ready**: titles, images and gift-intent copy.
 - ☐ **Deals and coupons are submitted** and approved before each retailer's deadline.
 - ☐ **Ratings and reviews are strong enough** on every advertised SKU to convert.
 - ☐ **You own the featured offer** on every SKU you're paying to promote.
 - ☐ **Variations and gift sets are set up** so shoppers land on the right option.
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03

Campaigns & targeting

Holiday shoppers search differently. Your structure should too.

- ☐ **Holiday campaigns are separate** from always-on, so results are readable.
 - ☐ **Branded keywords are defended** against competitors bidding on your name.
 - ☐ **Gift and occasion terms are added**, like "gifts for her" and "stocking stuffers."
 - ☐ **Retargeting audiences are built now** (product viewers, cart abandoners) to activate at peak.
 - ☐ **Negative keywords are refreshed** to cut irrelevant holiday traffic.
 - ☐ **Ad creative leads with the deal**, not just the product.
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04

Bidding & placements

Clicks cost more at peak. Set the rules before the auction heats up.

- ☐ **Bids are adjusted ahead of peak**, not after costs spike.
 - ☐ **Automated bidding has guardrails:** maximum bid caps and return-on-ad-spend floors.
 - ☐ **Premium placements go to hero deals**, like top of search and homepage.
 - ☐ **Dayparting matches when your shoppers** actually buy, not when your team is online.
 - ☐ **Bids reset after Cyber Monday** instead of running hot into December.
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05

Multi-network coordination

Every retail media network and retailer site you sell on. One plan.

- ☐ **You know which networks matter most** for your category this season.
 - ☐ **Pricing and promotions are consistent** across retailers to avoid price-match losses.
 - ☐ **Budget follows performance**, not last year's split between networks.
 - ☐ **Onsite and offsite campaigns are coordinated**, not bidding against each other for the same shopper.
 - ☐ **Every network's deadlines live on one calendar**: deals, creative and budget changes.
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06

Measurement

Decide what success means before Nov 26, then keep learning after.

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- ☐ **Baselines are captured now:** cost per click, conversion rate and return on ad spend.
 - ☐ **KPIs are agreed in advance** with your agency: incremental sales, new-to-brand and profit.
 - ☐ **Attribution windows are understood** so late-arriving sales aren't misread.
 - ☐ **One Cyber Week dashboard** is set up, with one owner who reads it daily.
 - ☐ **New-to-brand shoppers are saved** as audiences for Q1 remarketing.
 - ☐ **A post-mortem is booked** for early December, while the data is fresh.
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Score yourself.

Count your checks out of 33.

28–33

Holiday-ready

Fine-tune and watch pacing closely.

18–27

Real gaps

Fix the items tied to your biggest spend first.

0–17

Budget at risk

Get an outside set of eyes before Nov 26.

Want a second set of eyes **before Black Friday?**

The Laflin & Lela Retail Media Audit is an independent, senior-level review of your spend across every retail media network and retailer site you advertise on, with fixes ranked by impact.

BEFORE PEAK

Find wasted spend and fix it before Cyber Week.

AFTER PEAK

Learn what really worked and plan a sharper Q1.

Scored report · Top 10 fixes · 90-day action plan · Live readout

Book a fit call at laflinlela.com

Or comment "AUDIT" and I'll send you details.