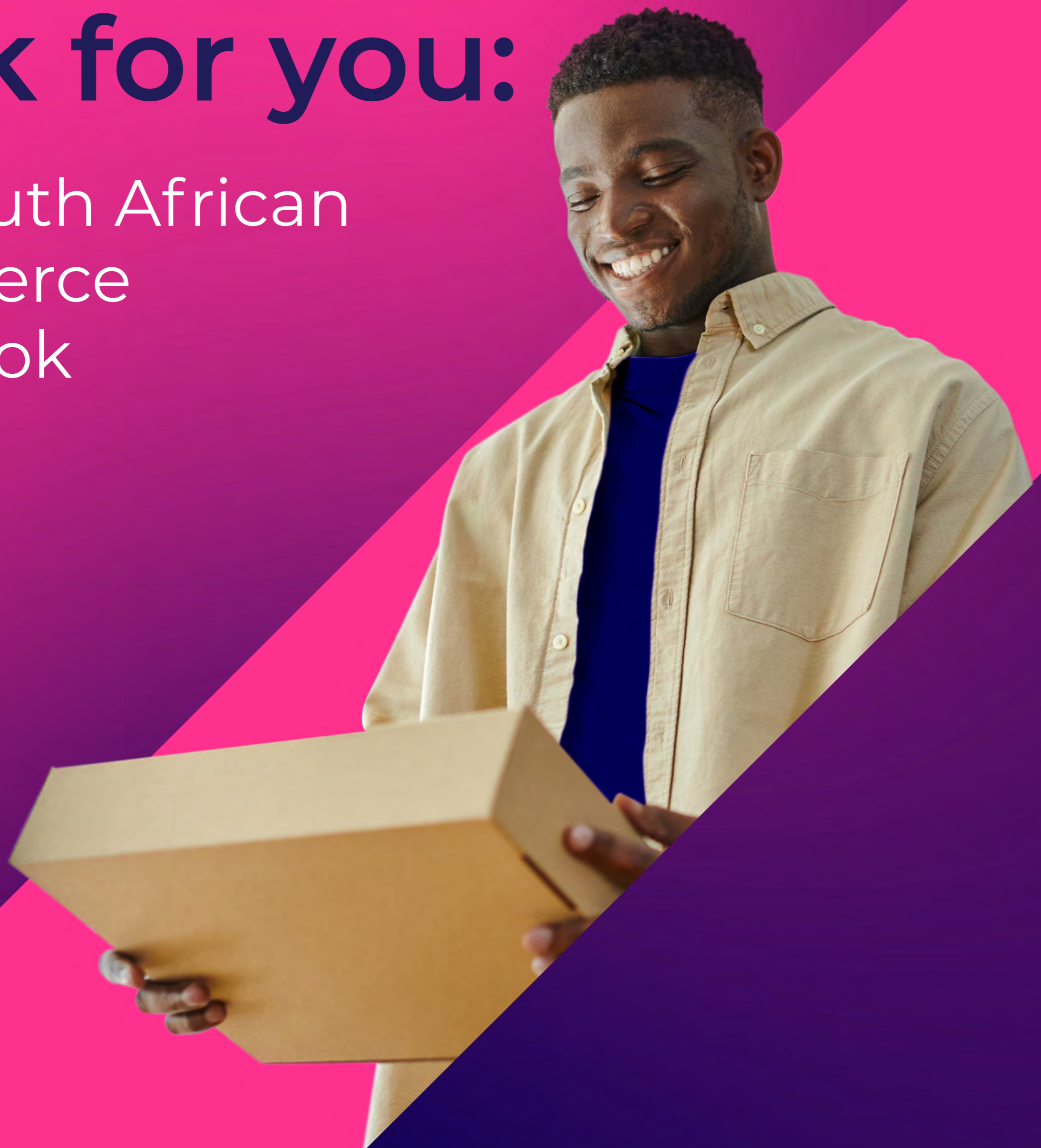




Making Black Friday & Cyber Monday **work for you:**

Your South African
ecommerce
handbook



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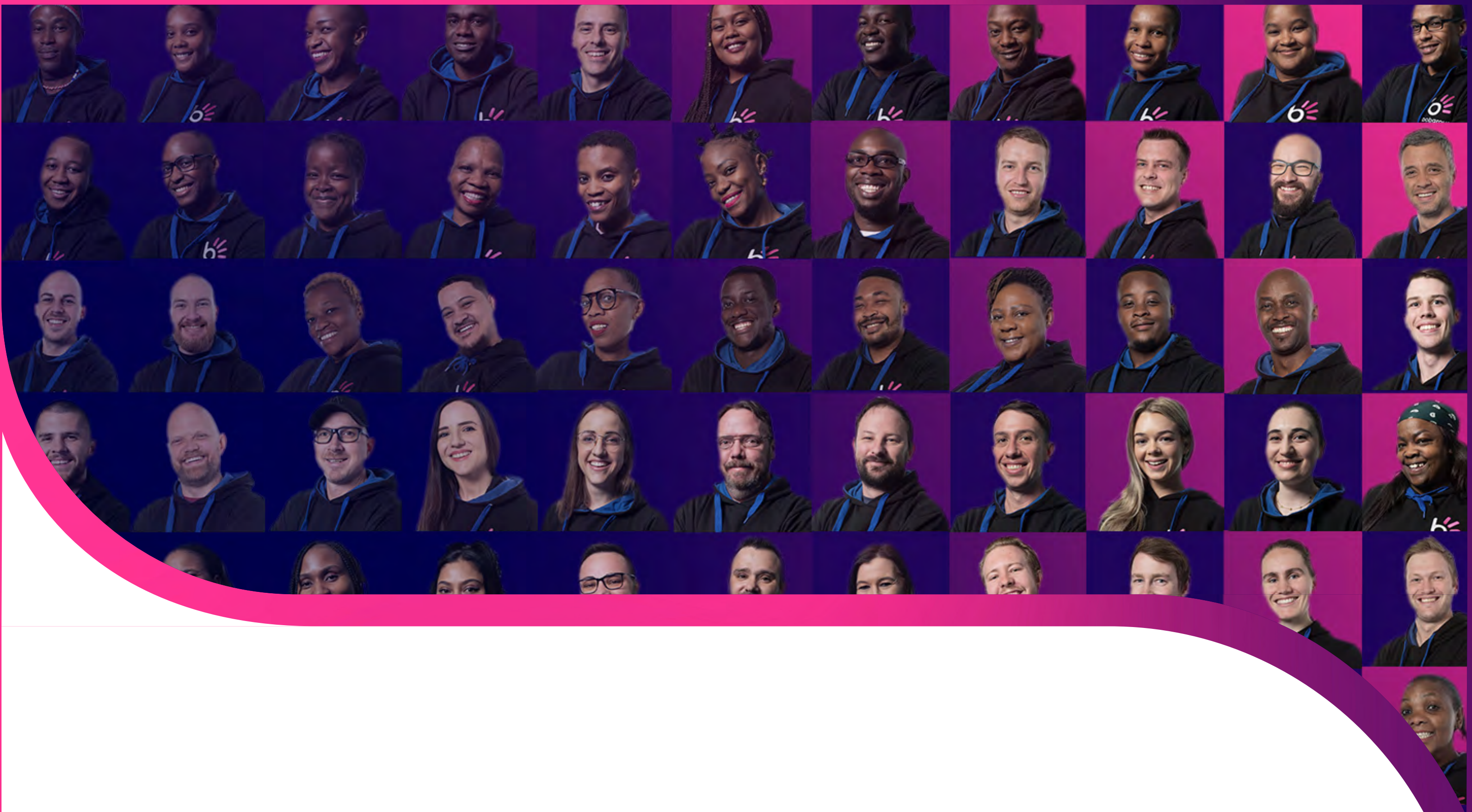
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Who we **are**

At Bob Group, we believe in making ecommerce more accessible to everyone, so that all South Africans can buy, sell, and achieve their goals online. That's why we've created this handbook to help you master Black Friday and Cyber Monday (BFCM).

With more than 20 years of ecommerce experience under our belts, we know how to knock it out of the park during Black Friday and Cyber Week. In this handbook, we'll share our top tips and hacks to help you sell like never before.

Black Friday & Cyber Monday are two of the biggest online shopping events of the year, so make sure you're prepared to profit from the increased demand we see every November.

Bob
Group in
numbers:

20+
years of
experience

5000+
happy
merchants

100%
passion

Let's get **started**

Black Friday and Cyber Monday are fast approaching - and that means it's time to make sure your ecommerce business is ready. BFCM marks the start of the holiday shopping season, with shoppers looking for unbeatable discounts on their favourite products, for themselves and as gifts for the upcoming holidays.

For online sellers, this is a great opportunity to drive sales, build customer loyalty, and increase brand recognition. It's important to take advantage of this potentially lucrative time, but with many companies fighting for shoppers' attention, you need to be able to stand out from the competition.

That means preparing early and having a great ecommerce strategy in place. This comprehensive checklist will provide you with all the steps you need to take to make the most of BFCM 2024.

Black Friday sales can be unpredictable – and so are online shoppers. If you really want to have a successful BFCM weekend, you need to be able to adapt to any situation. Be prepared for the unexpected.

Recent surveys indicate that 74% of South Africans are extremely concerned about their personal financial situation as of 2024, reflecting a slight increase from previous years. This heightened concern is largely due to ongoing economic challenges, including rising interest rates and inflation, which have intensified the cost-of-living crisis in South Africa.

In 2023, consumers experienced a significant reduction in disposable income, leading to cautious spending habits. Despite these constraints, many are still inclined to purchase treats and gifts during the festive season, actively seeking out bargains and discounts wherever possible. Notably, the last quarter of the year remains a peak shopping period, making it crucial for businesses to capture consumer spending during this time.

As we move into 2025, economic forecasts suggest that while inflation is expected to stabilise around 4.5%, the restrictive interest rate environment—currently at 8.25%—continues to exert pressure on household budgets. This situation underscores the importance of strategic financial planning for consumers as they navigate these challenging economic conditions.

Operations

Before BFCM comes around, you and your team need to be ready to handle the increase in orders, returns, and buyer communications (including complaints). You should ensure everyone knows just what to do to keep all your customers happy.

Checklist

- ✓ Organise training for your customer service team so they're ready for the increase in queries.
- ✓ If needed, hire temporary employees to assist during BFCM – but don't forget, they will need training, too.
- ✓ Put support processes in place for your team.
- ✓ Create a detailed action plan with responsibilities and deadlines.
- ✓ Use customer service templates to answer frequently asked questions (FAQs).
- ✓ Monitor social media for customer comments (good and bad).
- ✓ Ensure you have a back-up plan for any technical issues, or if your site or systems go down.

Prepare your customer support team for an influx of inquiries. Where possible, offer extended support hours and ensure your team is equipped to answer common issues and questions. Remember the majority of your support load is going to manifest in the days post Black Friday.

Andy Higgins, Managing Director



Listen to your customers!

The most common complaints from online shoppers in 2023-2024 include:

- **Delivery Issues:**
Late or missing deliveries of orders.
- **Defective Goods:**
Faulty items received shortly after purchase.
- **Poor Customer Service:**
Inadequate support when resolving complaints.
- **Cancellation Problems:**
Difficulties in processing order cancellations.
- **Misleading Product Descriptions:**
Items not matching what was advertised.
- **Payment Issues:**
Problems with transaction processing or refunds.
- **Return Challenges:**
Complicated return processes and policies.
- **Website Usability:**
Difficulties navigating or using online platforms.
- **Security Concerns:**
Worries about data privacy and fraud.

[Source: Business Tech. Online article, (2024) / MyBroadband. Online article, (2024) / Labour Guide. Online guide, (2023) / TechCentral. Online article, (2024) / SA Consumer Complaints. Online complaint platform, (2024) / NFOSA. Media release, (2024) / SA News. Online article, (2024). Country: South Africa.]

Teamwork will be crucial this season, so prioritise supporting and motivating your teams using the resources at your disposal. Take this opportunity to cultivate a safe space for everyone and use your experiences to make you better and stronger moving forward. Don't forget to celebrate the small wins along the way; these moments can significantly boost morale and demonstrate that you can navigate this season with pride and a sense of accomplishment!

Juanise Breytenbach, Head of People



Inventory

No matter how busy you get during BFCM, it's vital to keep an eye on your inventory. It's one of the most important factors in any ecommerce business.

Checklist

- ✓ Decide what products you'll put on sale for Black Friday and Cyber Monday.
- ✓ Look at your sales from previous years and keep up with current trends to help you predict how much inventory you'll need.
- ✓ If you think you'll need extra stock, be sure to order it well in advance.
- ✓ Create a contingency plan in case of overselling or stock shortages.
- ✓ If you have a lot of stock, or lots of different items, consider using inventory management software to help you through BFCM.

To speed up the fulfillment process, pre-pack popular items that are expected to be top sellers. This will help you get shipments out the door more quickly once orders start rolling in, reducing the chances of shipping delays.

Anita Erasmus, Head of Business





How big a deal is BFCM?

177%

Total growth in orders received compared to October 2023.

14,000+

Total number of orders received during BFCM 2023

+18%

Compared to the average order value in October 2023.

These updates reflect the significant growth and changes in consumer behaviour during the BFCM period this year.

***From 00:00 on Friday, November 24 to 23:59 on Monday, November 27, 2023, the updated statistics compared to the same period in 2022.**

Proactively secure stock from suppliers well in advance, not only for your own platforms but also for marketplaces like bobshop.co.za. Initiate meaningful discussions with your suppliers early on to ensure a sufficient stock supply at the right price, enabling you to offer meaningful deals and fulfil them swiftly amidst the surge in shopping volume. It's crucial to anticipate and accommodate natural delays, making efficient order fulfilment a top priority. By doing so, you'll not only meet customer expectations but also thrive in the competitive online marketplace landscape.



Craig Lubbe, Head of Marketplace

Marketing

During the busy period around BFCM, the competition for consumers' attention can be fierce. November is way too late to start marketing – you need to be planning your BFCM deals and communicating them well in advance.

Checklist

- ✓ Decide how to promote your Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales.
- ✓ **Work out the details:**
 - ✓ What kind of promotions will you run?
 - ✓ How long will they last for?
 - ✓ When will they start and end?
 - ✓ Will you have different promotions on different days?
 - ✓ Where will you run these promotions? On your site, on social media, or both?
 - ✓ How will you measure the success of these promotions?
 - ✓ Will you need help in running the promotions?



- ✓ Try different tactics, like VIP or early access offers and daily deals, or set up a countdown timer to your best BFCM deals.
- ✓ Make sure your promotions appeal to the people you want to target.
- ✓ Make some noise, and do it early!
- ✓ Start your BFCM promotions early, to beat the last-minute rush.
- ✓ Use promotional emails and abandoned cart emails, and decide when to send them.
- ✓ Reward loyal customers with exclusive deals or extra points for making purchases on BFCM.
- ✓ Enhance your SEO strategy to improve your site ranking for important keywords.
- ✓ Ensure that your landing page is SEO-friendly.
- ✓ Ensure that the landing page uses targeted BFCM keywords, meta tags, descriptions, and more.
- ✓ Add home page callouts for your BFCM campaigns.
- ✓ Prepare descriptive URLs (/black-friday-deals/ or /black-friday-sale/), and if possible, use the same URL as last year.
- ✓ Make sure that your product descriptions include buzz words such as unique, durable, sale, or Black Friday.
- ✓ Go big on personalisation to make your customers feel extra special.

Leverage social media to build excitement during your teaser phase using countdowns and product sneak peeks of your BFCM products. Consider influencers to expand your reach to tap into new customer audiences, boost credibility, and highlight your product and unboxing experience. Another powerful tool to consider is upselling and cross-selling techniques to enhance your customers' shopping experience while increasing your sales. Finally, don't forget to focus on what makes your business unique, whether it's a product offering or a feature.

Taila Casquinha, Bob Shop Marketing Manager



Infrastructure

Just because you can handle your orders on a normal day, it doesn't mean your systems are guaranteed to stand up to the extra pressure during peak sales periods such as BFCM.

Even if you had a successful operation last year, you shouldn't simply assume that things will go smoothly this year, too. The increase in traffic over the BFCM weekend will expose any weaknesses in your digital infrastructure.

Checklist

- ✓ Ensure your website host is ready for a surge in traffic.
- ✓ Run the necessary tests to ensure your website host can manage the surge.
- ✓ Ensure there is a queue system in place for higher than anticipated traffic.
- ✓ Optimise your site navigation so customers can easily find what they're looking for.
- ✓ Create a special BFCM landing page or add filters that clearly label discounts.
- ✓ Make sure your return policies are clear, fair and hassle-free.
- ✓ Make sure your site is easy to navigate so that people don't get frustrated and leave.
- ✓ Make the checkout process nice and smooth, with as many payment options as possible.

Make sure your website can handle increased traffic and that the checkout process is as smooth as possible. The last thing you want during peak sales time is a website crash or frustrated customers due to a complex checkout process.

Jaco Roux, Head of Product



- ✓ Ensure your site is compatible with all mobile devices, and easy to use.
- ✓ Test all the functions of your site, including the user experience (UX).
- ✓ Ensure that prices and inventory changes update quickly.
- ✓ Prepare the “sold-out” badge to avoid frustrations.
- ✓ Prepare the maintenance page.
- ✓ Ensure your payment service provider is ready to withstand higher than usual sales volumes.
- ✓ Set up a Black Friday payment success page to manage fulfilment expectations.
- ✓ Ensure that a secondary payment gateway is in place, just in case.

More people are shopping via mobile devices than ever before. Ensure that your website is mobile-friendly and that the checkout process is just as seamless on a phone as it is on a desktop. Additionally, it's crucial that product descriptions and images are of high quality, detailed and accurate to minimise confusion, returns and customer dissatisfaction.

Cornel Rautenbach, Head of Technology



The importance of mobile

As of 2024, 70% of ecommerce shoppers in South Africa use their smartphones for online purchases. This reflects a growing trend towards mobile shopping, emphasising the necessity for businesses to ensure their websites are fully mobile compatible.

[Source: DHL. Online article, (2024)]

Shipping

Logistics is one of the most important elements of your operation, so you need to put in extra work to make sure your logistics set-up can handle the extra BFCM sales.

26%

Total growth in shipments made on Bob Go from 2022 to 2023.

5.20 kg

Average weight of shipments shipped from 2022 to 2023.

*From 00:00 on Friday, 24 November to 23:59 on Monday, 27 November 2023 compared to the same period in 2022.

Checklist

- ✓ Calculate the estimated shipping costs of the products you're selling.
- ✓ **Make your delivery options as flexible as possible, and consider offering:**
 - ✓ Free delivery
 - ✓ Click & Collect
- ✓ If necessary, request an account limit increase on Bob Go.
- ✓ Place an order for courier stationery in accordance with sales predictions.
- ✓ Make sure you have enough packing material for this busy sales period.
- ✓ If needed, book a truck collection for peak days.

- ✓ Test and review rates at checkout.
- ✓ Stock up on paper or labels for waybill printing.
- ✓ Set up predefined parcels on Bob Go to speed up your fulfilment processes.
- ✓ Have a back-up plan in place in case you sell an item that is not in stock.
- ✓ Let your customers know that delivery times will be longer during this busy period.

1 - 2 days

The time period by which delivery times will be extended in the busy season.

Same-day and overnight delivery will take between 2 to 3 working days.

Economy delivery will take between 5 to 7 working days.





Reporting

Checklist

- ✓ Set your targets for the day/weekend/week, including Average Order Value (AOV), Conversion Rate (CR), overall sales, and orders.
- ✓ Create dashboards for real-time monitoring of important metrics. You can use your results from BFCM 2023 as a baseline to compare your year-on-year results.
- ✓ Make sure your site has the correct tagging and tracking pixels in place.

Conclusion

Black Friday and Cyber Monday are busy shopping days, but with the right preparation, your online business can benefit greatly from the increase in sales and influx of shoppers. Start planning now and get ready to make the most of this amazing opportunity.

Bob Group offers incredible services, tools and resources that can help you maximise your sales, ensure your customers have a great online experience, and overcome any hurdles. With Bob Group, you can look forward to your best-ever BFCM!

Contact us

For help with any aspect of selling or fulfilment, reach out to Bob Group and one of our ecommerce experts will be happy to help you.

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