



If you're a small business selling online you don't need us to tell you how the Golden Quarter can make or break your entire year.

With Black Friday now established alongside Christmas as the first of two massive shopping events stretching across November and December, it's important to know you're using every opportunity and marketing tactic to maximise sales.

The great news is **there are some shortcuts you can take** to find your next customers that you might not have thought of, and the even better news is that it's not too late to put them into practice ahead of peak trading this year. **Scroll our five tips to get started.**

Grow online by reaching new customers and increasing sales with Awin Access. Easily promote your products through thousands of vetted online partners. It's low cost, risk free and no experience needed.

Five insider tips for small businesses



Affiliate Partnerships are a great way of diversifying your marketing activity

Have you ever wondered how you get featured on a cashback or voucher site? Or would you love to work with bloggers, influencers or price comparison sites?

Our research shows two-thirds of consumers look for a coupon or voucher before making a retail purchase. And almost half of shoppers consider the views of bloggers and editorial content sites before making an online purchase.

Affiliate partnerships like this offer great tactical exposure for your products. **During peak they are also some of the most widely viewed places** for

people seeking out Black Friday promotions or researching where to buy their Christmas gifts from.

Don't just take our word for it. Shopify's Future of eCommerce Report found half of American shoppers were influenced by personalized discounts; promotions you could offer across these sites.

Working with them needn't be time consuming or admin heavy and all tracking and payments can be managed through one interface. And one of the perks of partnering with these sites is they will only charge you a commission when you make a valid sale.

When they feature you - typically for free - on their websites and they drive you a new customer who buys one of your products, you just pay them a percentage of the sale based on what margin works for you.

The good news is that even if you decide discounting isn't right for you, there are plenty of other partners to choose from until you **find the ones that are the right fit for your business.**

If it still sounds daunting, don't worry, there is plenty of help and support available to help you get up and running in a matter of days.

Top tips

- ➔ Decide a margin that works for you: use a cashback site like Topcashback to see what commissions other retail businesses like yours are paying to get a sale.
- ➔ If you want to use voucher codes, why not set a minimum or stretching spend, e.g. "Spend £100 to get 10% off". Use this tactically to push your average baskets up.
- ➔ Even if you're not interested in discounting, decide what partnerships would be a good fit for you: influencers? Content sites? Price comparison or cashback sites for example.



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Go early

Ten years ago everyone was focused on December but when Black Friday emerged as a new event it pushed the period when sales were at their highest to the end of November.

Over the past couple of years however **advertisers have been launching sales earlier and earlier.** In fact some of the first Golden Quarter promotions are now launched in October. All of this means that consumers are hunting for bargains well before Christmas.

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Therefore you need to think about how you can **sustain your promotions across multiple sales events**, which now also includes

Singles Day on 11th November, a relatively new event from China that is catching on in the West.

Affiliate partners can help you plan your marketing activity across all three months of the Golden Quarter, so you should be reaching out to them now to see how they can help you maximise your sales across all three months.

And remember, savvy consumers are anticipating these events, so make sure you're taking advantage of this awareness.



Top tips

- ➔ Do your homework about all the peak events across the Golden Quarter. Don't see Black Friday as a one day sprint, think of it as a month long marathon.
- ➔ If you can, spread your offers across the weeks of Golden Quarter rather than splurging everything in one generic promotion.
- ➔ Affiliate partners can help advise, support and promote your marketing plans across the Golden Quarter: ask them how they can help you do the heavy lifting.



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Find your next new customer

Loyal customers are worth their weight in gold.

But how do you find your next new ones? Our numbers show that around 30 to 40% of customers you will attract from affiliate partners will be ones that have never shopped with you before. And that figure can rise to more than 50% depending on what partners you choose.

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That gives you the opportunity to target first time shoppers with **exclusive offers, discounts, content and promotions** and focus on turning them into your next new loyal customer.

Online sales now represent 36% of all retail in the UK and the recent surge in people shopping online has created a whole new set of shoppers

who are pretty new to buying from ecommerce sites.

You'll be able to check the details of every transaction in your interface and **discover which partners are driving new customers**, as well as those pushing your average baskets up. In other words, you can focus your attention on those affiliate partners who are driving the right type of customer you'll want to keep.

This is really important as the more you focus in on the metrics that matter to you, the more you'll get the biggest bang for your buck from the affiliate channel and your affiliate partners.

Top tips

- ➔ Build new relationships with affiliate partners who can help drive new customers for you
- ➔ Also bear in mind other metrics that can indicate they're pushing good quality shoppers, such as those who are spending more than average
- ➔ Don't forget influencers and bloggers. If they love your products they can share details about them with their often loyal followings.



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Play to your strengths

Working with affiliate partners can be confusing.

There are new rules and processes to learn, but once you're up and running you can use it to try new marketing tactics you've never tried before.

Small businesses have a few things going in their favour when working with affiliate partners.

Firstly they can be nimble, quick to respond to new opportunities and fast in turning things around.

We work with different technology solutions that can help you tackle problems like poor click to sale conversion rates or companies that can

help stop so many of your customers leaving your site before they buy. Or maybe you'd like to offer recommendations to shoppers based on what they've added to their basket.

For big brands these could take months to implement, but for small businesses who don't have to deal with complicated internal processes, they can be **switched on instantly.**

One of the lessons we learned from the pandemic is consumers like to shop local and support small companies. Use this to your advantage over the big corporates.

And the beauty of this technology is it's also only **paid for when a valid sale is made** on your site.

Also, one of the lessons we learned from the pandemic is consumers like to shop local and support small companies. Use this to your advantage over the big corporates. Also find affiliate partners who want to support small businesses over big box retailers.



Top tips

- ➔ If your website conversion isn't up to scratch, consider using affiliate partner technology to help push up sales: more clicks converting = more revenue for you
- ➔ Think of technology partners as an outsourced development team who can help boost your ecommerce proposition.
- ➔ Consider how you can push your local or small business credentials. People are turning their backs on mega retailers.



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Peak shopping isn't just for retail (or gifting!)

Something interesting happens around the long shopping weekend of Black Friday.

You may think people are focused on buying presents for their friends and family, but actually research we did suggests as **many people are looking to buy for themselves** as they are for others.

So think about how that could impact your messaging. Rather than just focusing on gift finders for others, think about how you speak directly to

shoppers treating themselves to something from your store.

There is no doubt this year is going to be tough for many

Rather than just focusing on gift finders for others, think about how you speak directly to shoppers treating themselves to something from your store.

retailers and consumers alike, with people's budgets increasingly squeezed. That could reduce what people are willing to spend on others, therefore also **consider how you push lower ticket items** to people on your site.

One other interesting Black Friday trend is that **people are looking at all sorts of products**, not just traditional retail. So even if you sell things that you don't think fit into popular Black Friday categories, don't forget to take advantage of the big surge in online traffic around the end of November.



Top tips

- ➔ Black Friday is about self-gifting as much as for others. Consider this in how you position your products on your website.
- ➔ Consider your messaging: "if you're buying for others, why not treat yourself!"
- ➔ Even if you sell services, office supplies, insurance or telephone contracts, remember people are in buying mode and more inclined to buy from you at this time of year.