The summer season is upon us, but for eCommerce retailers, it’s the ideal time to begin planning for the hectic holiday shopping season. The holiday season is critical to digital businesses, and now is the time to begin your 2023 preparation.

For eCommerce retailers, you can never be too prepared, and that’s why ensuring your team is fully prepared is paramount to success. Giving your team a dress rehearsal now for the holidays helps them with the stress of executing and operating during peak times, as well as building experience with new team members, and any new third-party partners before going into peak season.

Ensuring that you and your team have proper planning and execution nailed down prior to the holidays is crucial to allowing you to focus on other areas that are so important to delivering the customer experience, including supply chain, logistics, and many more.

Here is a comprehensive checklist designed to ensure your website’s readiness and maximization of holiday conversions.

The 6 Steps to 2023 Holiday Shopping Success

1. **Check Site Speed**
   - Are your web pages loading within the golden 3-second limit? Consider that the average Amazon page loads in just 2.3 seconds. Optimal site speed falls between 3 to 5 seconds. Where does your site stand?
   - Just a one-second reduction in page load time can lead to a 5.7% lift in mobile conversions, a 3.3% lift on desktop, and a 12.2% reduction in bounce rate. The implications for your sales from Black Friday to Cyber Monday could be monumental!

2. **Evaluate Your Third-Party Stack**
   - Getting the right mix of third-party tech on your site is critical to holiday success. First step: assess the number and functionality of third-party services running on your site. Then, determine which ones need attention or removal, and which site functionality is missing and needs to be added. Each third-party technology should serve a very important purpose, and if it doesn’t, it’s time to remove it from your stack. Third-parties are necessary to deliver the online experience your customers expect, but if they aren’t sequenced properly for efficient loading, you risk losing significant site speed, and this can be a holiday conversion killer.

3. **Stress Test Your Site**
   - Simulate traffic spikes to ensure your site can handle increased holiday traffic without crashing. During the holidays, traffic to your site will be higher than at any other time of the year. Make sure it can handle the influx of traffic without slowing down page load times, or worst case, crashing your site. Preschedule load testing and final performance optimizations in advance so you have time to fix any issues ahead of the rush. The last thing you want on Black Friday is your site to be down.
Confirm Site Security

Define clear roles and emergency procedures to keep your operations running smoothly even in unforeseen situations. Coordinating schedules around the holidays can get tricky with travel, weather, and time-off, so this is something you need to confirm with your team now. Have a back-up plan in case of unplanned absences. When it comes to having a successful holiday season, you can never have enough planning.

Here are the areas that must be covered:

- **Marketing Operations** – Monitoring of campaigns and analytics
- **Technical Operations** – Monitoring of alerts and analytics
- **Troubleshoot and Fix** – Front and back-end issues and QA
- **Critical Issue Manager** – Triage, vendor coordination, status updates, escalation
- **Specialized Roles** – IT Security, Fraud/Risk

Manage Third-Party Violations

As third-party technologies account for 75% of page-load time on eCommerce sites, your plan should include strategies for handling third-party violations. Steps should include:

- Create a spreadsheet with support and escalation contacts for all third-parties
- Notify third-parties of your points of contact
- Request third-parties’ troubleshooting guides and status pages
- Establish a maintenance page to inform shoppers of issues
- Ensure your stage/test site matches production

Timeline

**Right Now!**

**Learn About Performance**
YOTTAA provides info on the benefits of fast site speed. 1 second faster = 6% conversion lift.

**Check Site Speed**
YOTTAA runs a test on your site’s current speed and sends you a report.

**Evaluate Third-Parties**
YOTTAA evaluates all third-party tech on your site and how they impact page load times.

**Conduct Free Trial**
YOTTAA runs an A/B split test trial to demonstrate site speed improvements.

**Go Live**
Your site’s performance improves by up to 60% and conversions lift by up to 20%!