A Guide to a Successful Flash Sale

How to give all your customers a secure, seamless online shopping experience.

SUPER
SALE
UP TO 50% OFF

HURRY UP!
MEGA SALE!!!

BUY 1 GET 1 FREE
BOGO
LIMITED TIME ONLY

SPECIAL OFFER
FLASH SALE
UP TO 70% OFF

BLACK FRIDAY
SALE 50% OFF
ONLY THIS WEEKEND

Protect Your Flash Sale Revenue

HOLIDAY SALES

LIMITED INVENTORY SALES

FLASH SALES

LAUNCH DAY SALES

HYPE SALES

High Volume, High Velocity Sales

Flash sales, launch day sales, holiday sales, and limited inventory sales - these high volume, high velocity events have the potential to bring in big revenue. Marketing teams have invested significantly in ad spend to promote them, and executives are looking at these events to close gaps in sales numbers.

But special precautions need to be taken during these events to ensure customers can explore your site, browse products, and buy without issue.

In this guide we'll walk you through the steps to take to ensure your flash sale drives the revenue boost you need.

Flash Sales and FOMO

Online flash sales are a common and largely successful tactic for eCommerce retailers today. During a flash sale, items are offered for a reduced price for a limited amount of time. It's often for a specific number of days or hours – or until stock runs out.
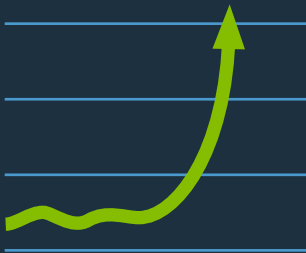
Amazon Prime days, Black Friday and Cyber Monday are well-known flash sale events that rake in billions of sales annually. Amazon Prime Day topped $12 billion in July 2022, and roughly 87.2 million consumers shopped online during Black Friday last year.

$12 Billion

primeday
JULY 2022

87.2M Shoppers

Black Friday
2022

Online stores that operate on Wix.com reportedly increase monthly gross merchandise value by an average of **64,000%** when they run a flash sale.

Flash Sales Tap Into Consumer FOMO

Consumers are more apt to open their wallets for a flash sale because they're motivated by the power of FOMO. They know "time is running out" on the item being in stock or being sold at a reduced price. **The sense of scarcity can be a major motivator for turning browsers into buyers.**

During a Flash Sale, Your Customers Value Speed Above All

Preparing your site for a flash sale means making the site experience as streamlined as possible for online shoppers.

On a typical shopping day ecommerce teams depend on third-party applications to provide enhanced shopping experiences - suggesting other products, enabling social sharing, streamlining payment. These elements help convert browsers into buyers through a 'wow' factor.

But during a flash sale, the goal is speed and efficiency. Shoppers are after limited inventory or racing a ticking clock of when a deal expires. Flash sale pages need to be quick to load and even quicker to check out of.

Ecommerce teams need to strip down their sites to make the buying experience as quick and simple as possible.

Deliver a Great Customer Experience During Your Next Flash Sale

Reduce Distractions – On your flash sale product pages, disable non-critical third-parties like social sharing and recommendations, so shoppers can get on your site, load up their carts and pay quickly.

Study Past Performance – Look for load failures and other violations that have caused recent issues and play defense by disabling them on critical pages flash sale day.

Enable Prefetch – Using prefetch will enable your team to load the key flash sale pages into the browser so they load for your customers instantly.

Build a Waiting Room – A great last line of defense during peak traffic is to set up a queue or waiting room, to keep customers waiting patiently and prevent your site from crashing.

SUPER SALE UP TO 50% OFF
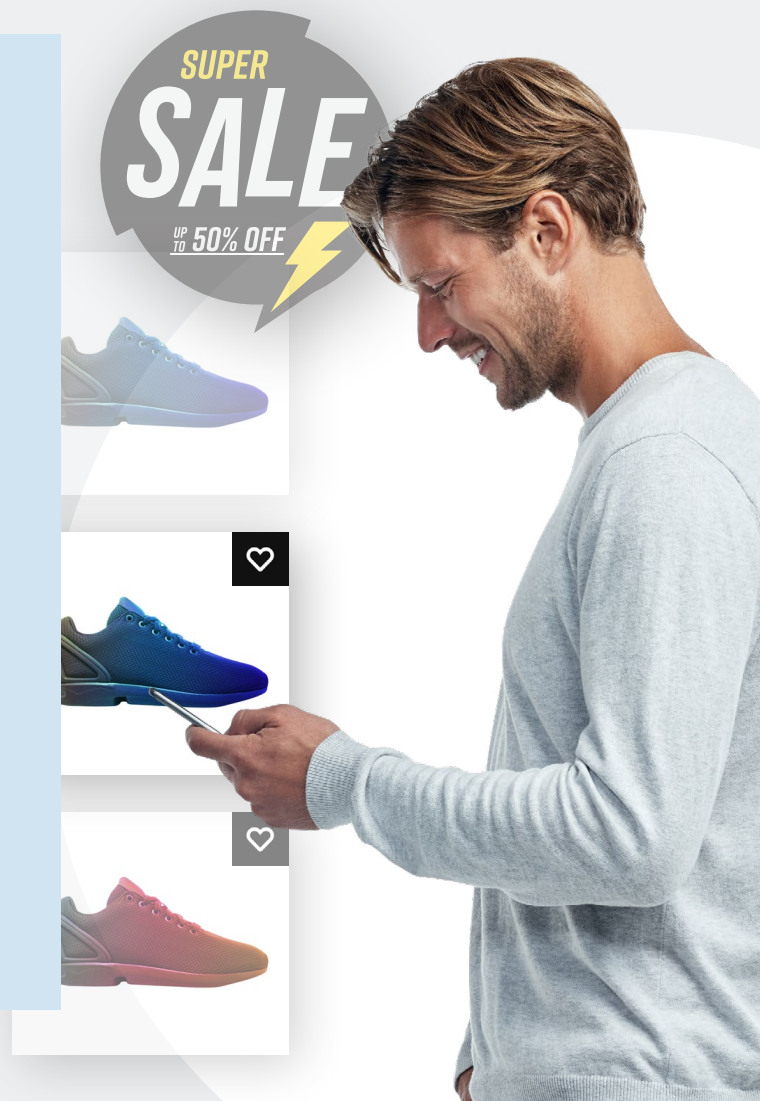
Bad Bots Become Especially Malicious During Flash Sales

The massive revenue opportunity at hand during a flash sale makes them top targets for malicious bot attacks.

Bots can purchase a significant amount of your inventory before real shoppers get a chance. High bot traffic, combined with real shopper traffic, can significantly slow down or even crash your site.

The graphic below from Human illustrates a typical launch day bot attack:
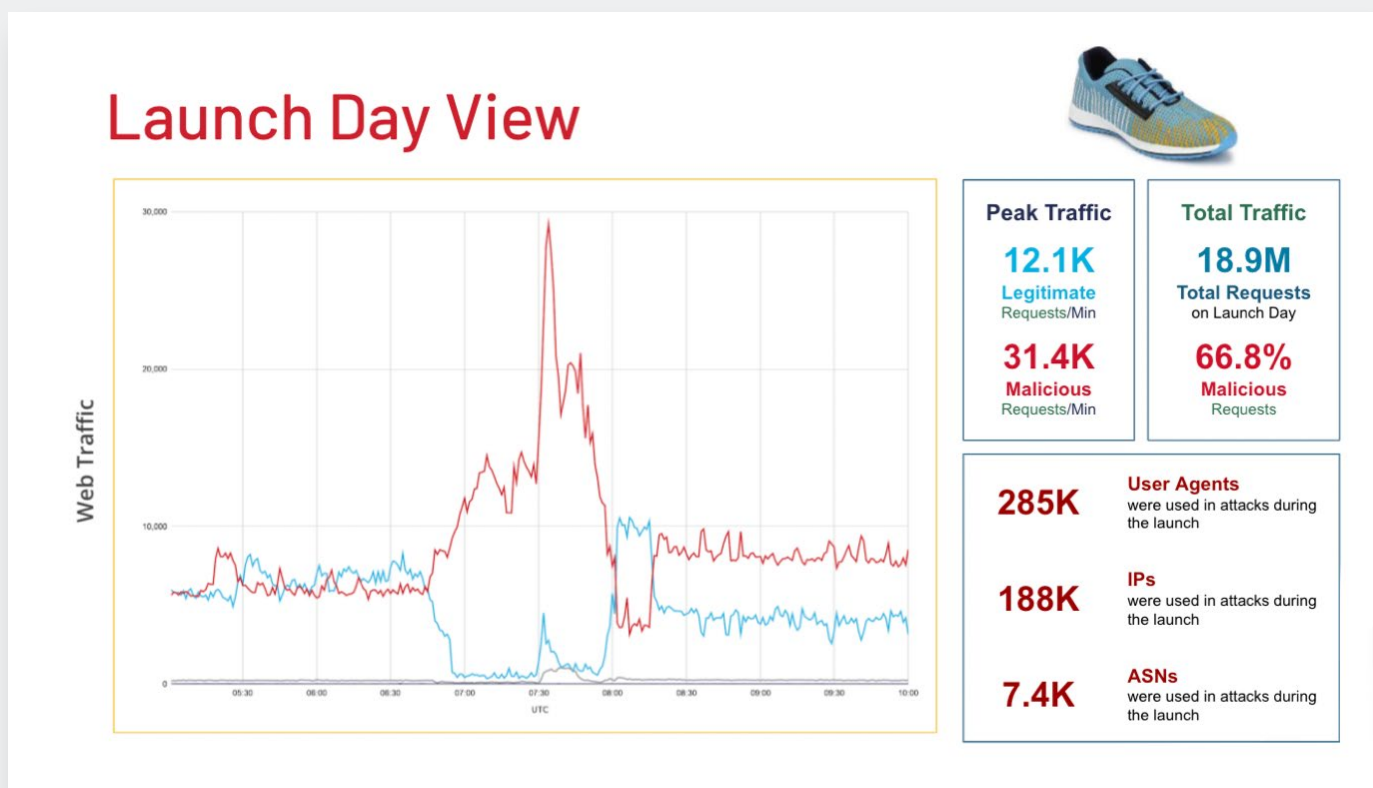
Source: Human Security

There's a spike in malicious traffic right when the sale begins as bots attempt to load up their carts and check out. At the same time, there is a much smaller spike (shown in blue) as the real shoppers begin the buyer journey.

In this example, at peak, there were 31,400 malicious requests per minute from bots, and the daily total of malicious requests landed at 66.8% for the entire sale. At sale launch, an estimated 90% of the traffic is malicious.

Optimize Your Site for Flash Sales

The following best practices will help prepare your site to deal with heavy traffic without crashing and ensure that real customers are the ones making purchases during a flash sale.

1 **Rally The Team**

Kate MacCabe, a retail expert with experience at Our Place, Brooklinen and Rothy's, recomends daily standups leading up to peak traffic season like holidays or flash sale days. Use these team standups to solidify day of tactics, confirm high-volume website staffing hours, and establish an emergency plan for site performance issues. Some YOTTAA customers have a day-of war-room with key vendors and partners to monitor the success of the site during sale day and solve issues as quickly as possible.

2 **Track and Monitor Page Behavior**

Ahead of your flash sale, establish monitor your site's day-to-day performance particularly on those pages you expect the heaviest traffic from on sale day. If you've built a new landing page or slimmed down product pages for sale day, have them up and running and measure them well ahead of the event. This will help get a handle on any common errors before the sale and identify anomalies.

3 **Control Access to Your Site**

Consider the customer experience for loyalty members and the public and ensure you're providing the best possible experience. If you're concerned about heavy traffic, consider waiting rooms, access codes or other crowd control measures to maintain order on sale day.

4 **Make it Mobile Friendly**

Online shopping is mobile-first and market reports expect mobile commerce to make up 70% of retail eCommerce sales by 2024. Image optimization, lazy loading and building a mobile-first experience custom for mobile shoppers should be key to your eCommerce strategy. Yottaa helps customers decide the elements that are critical to the mobile shopping experience during a flash sale, and slim down the mobile versions of flash sale product pages to drive maximum conversion rates.

5 **Provide a Secure Experience**

Flash sales protection should address both the human and bot components of limited time sales. When it comes to bots, use advanced machine learning and behavioral analysis to identify malicious and friendly bots, create whitelists and stay ahead of bot-driven disruptions.

6 **Report and Improve**

Monitoring the flash sale in real-time can help mitigate issues as they arise and provide critical learnings for the future. Plan post-mortem analysis of flash sale traffic data, security threats and conversion trends to make your next promotion even more successful.

Make your next flash sale the most successful one yet.

Special preparations must be taken during flash sale events to ensure customers can explore your site, browse products and buy with ease.

YOTTAA is a technology partner you can trust to ensure peak site performance, especially on your highest web traffic days. We provide a free site speed snapshot so you can identify opportunities to improve site performance.

LEARN MORE

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