



# How to win big with Gen Z this Cyber Week

*StudentBeans*



# The beginning of fall signals the lead up to the biggest retail event of the year - Black Friday.

Of course, this modern American tradition is more than just one day. Encompassing Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and the transaction -fuelled days surrounding them, the week-long shopping event has reached stratospheric heights in recent years. Since brands and stores embraced Black Friday as the start of the Christmas shopping season back in 2005, it has consistently ranked among the most popular shopping days of the year.

After a year like 2020, Gen Zs' pent-up demand and 'treat yourself' mentality will be influential in their spending power this year. With savings to spend, gifts to buy, and luxury purchases to be made, we've no doubt that Gen Z will be retail ready - the question is, will you be?

We're here to guide you through - with a round-up of key themes for the fall shopping period, as well as brand campaign success stories to provide a touch of inspo, and our top tips for winning big with Gen Z students for gifting season in 2021. Let's get started.





# Gifting

Black Friday takes place at the end of November. In other words, the countdown to Christmas is on - and you won't won't find many Gen Z students leaving their holiday shopping till the last minute.

**“Cyber Week is pretty big for me because I try to actually get all my Christmas shopping done in that 1-3 days span. Come December, I can just enjoy the holidays and have everything ready.”** - Bailey, Business Major from California

In fact, most students kick off their holiday shopping early. By the end of November, 95% of male students and 83% of female students have started shopping for the holidays. During last year's Black Friday sales, 71% of Gen Z bought for family



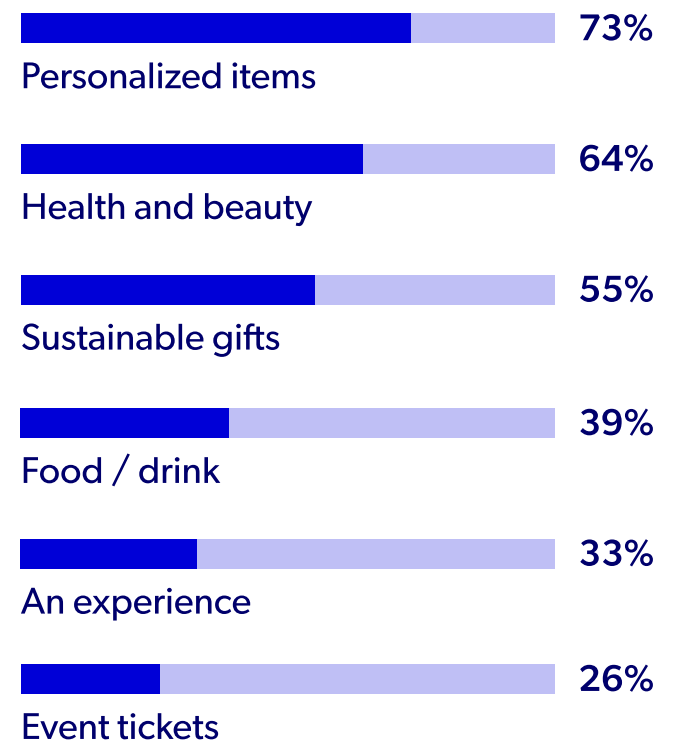
members, with 46% picking something up for a friend and 27% treating a partner. With so many students on the lookout for holiday gifts for their loved ones, fall will be the time for them to tread outside of their usual spending categories.

For those approaching Black Friday with gifting in mind, personalized gifts will be high on their radar - 73% of 16-24s are likely to buy personalized gifts this year and 44% list gifts with personalization as a top priority when shopping during Cyber Week. Brands with a personalized or licensed offering need to get ahead of the game by promoting their deals in advance - because you can guarantee Gen Zs will be watching in preparation.





**Are you likely to buy the following as holiday gifts for friends or family this year?**



**"I love Etsy, just because it's something unique and it's more personal. I like doing gag gifts and more personalized gifts for people. Now that I've gotten older, and I know more about the person, I try to make the gift more meaningful."** -  
Alyssa, Doctorate in Physical Therapy from Kentucky

## Sector snapshot

### FASHION

Clothes, shoes & accessories are year-round favorites for Gen Z. Purchases in this category account for 15% of their monthly outgoings - their biggest expense after rent, bills and food. So it's not a surprise that 91% of students will be on the lookout for fashion discounts during Black Friday. Plus, with a more normal New Year to look forward to, a wardrobe refresh is just the ticket.





# Sustainability

We characterize Gen Z as many things - digitally native, financially savvy, authentic. Another key characteristic that defines this generation is their politically and ethically conscious mindset - a quality that heavily influences their purchasing power.

Since the pandemic, young consumers have become even more concerned about climate change and making sustainable choices in their daily lives. In total, 95% of 16-24s say it's important that a brand cares about sustainability and protecting the environment.

**"I look for brands that are super sustainable. So brands that are more into the green type things...products that are recycled or recyclable and all those things."** - Kelly, Nursing student from Florida

When making purchases during the fall and winter months, 44% of Gen Zs list sustainability as a top priority, and 55% will be looking for sustainable gifts to buy this year. This cohort also likes to research in advance, not only to secure the best deals, but to make sure they are spending mindfully on something they really want or need. Social media is a great way to highlight your brand's sustainability efforts - or indeed any support for a good cause. Remember, Gen Zs value authenticity and transparency in a brand's messaging - own your tone of voice to really make a lasting impression.

**44% of Gen Zs list sustainability as a top priority when shopping during Cyber Week, and 55% will be looking for sustainable gifts to buy this year**

**Sector  
snapshot**

## HOMEWARES

This fall, **homewares** will be one to watch - 31% already plan to purchase within this sector during Black Friday sales. Students with a dorm room will be on the lookout for soft furnishings, artwork and lighting, and those moving into their own apartment will be keeping an eye out for kitchenware and larger furniture. 74% of students say that the look and feel of their home is very important to them, but they need that extra incentive - 96% would spend more on homewares brands with student incentives.





## Luxury purchases

Gen Z are known as a financially sensible generation. As the older members of this generation find their feet with their new financial independence, Gen Z consumer trends are becoming even more apparent, especially their need to balance quality with affordability.

**“When making a costly purchase, first of all, I just look up the product. I look it up on Google, I'll compare it to other products that are pretty similar, maybe other brands, too. And then I try to find which one is good.”** - Kelly, Nursing student from Florida



Retail events like Cyber Monday and Black Friday are a go-to for young consumers looking to purchase high ticket items - 35% of students list saving money on luxury items as a top priority when shopping during the season. With the average college student having a disposable income of around 60% to spend on discretionary items, and with Black Friday falling at the end of the month, students will be gearing up for a post-payday shopping spree to bag themselves a deal on high-value items like tech, entertainment and travel.

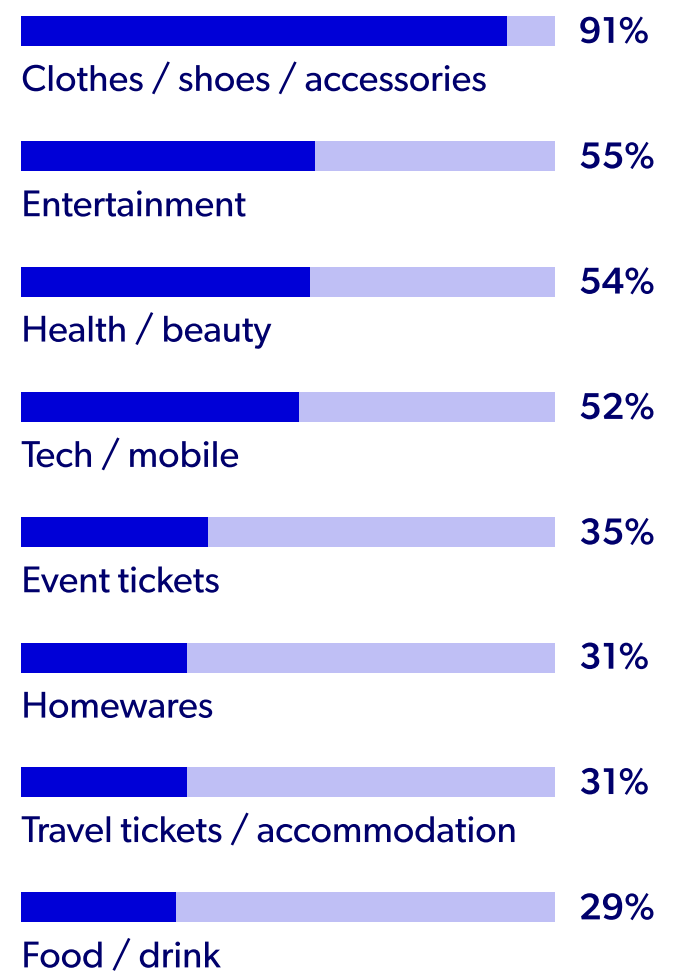
**“Around Black Friday, I'm looking for the expensive brands that I know that I can't afford year round. That's when I act like a queen!”** - Julz, Chemical Engineering student from New Jersey







## What products will you be looking out for during Cyber Week this year?



### Sector snapshot

## TECH & MOBILE

Tech and Mobile purchases especially tend to skyrocket among students around this time of year. This year, 52% of students plan to pick up something new, shiny and digital. When buying items with higher order values, such as a new laptop, students are more likely to wait for a discount. They are also willing to search far and wide for quality tech products - which 64% of students list as their top priority when shopping in this sector.

For tech brands, Black Friday is your chance to engage with tech-savvy students and guarantee their loyalty for years to come. 63% shop online for tech, and 68% shop in-store, so whether you are an ecommerce brand, high street retailer or both, make sure your deals stand out above the crowd.





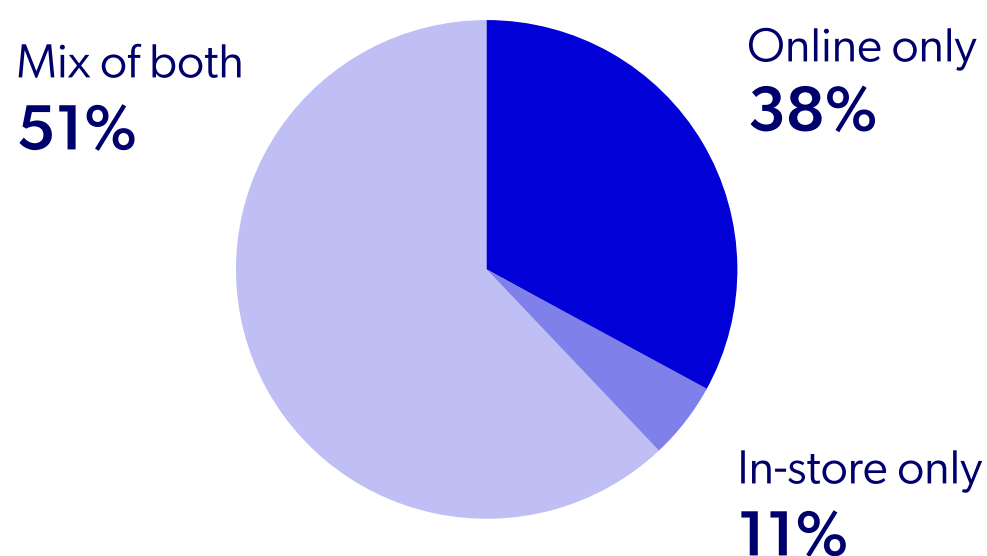
# The retail experience

Black Friday is typically a time for people to hit the shops in-person, but last year's event almost took place exclusively online due to COVID-19. Now, with life heading back to normal, the retail experience as we know it is certain to change to incorporate the physical with the digital - to nurture new habits formed during the pandemic.

They might be digital natives, but 62% of students prefer to mix up their online and in-store shopping during Black Friday - so how do you raise the bar?

Take Sports Direct's flagship store in London, for example. It has the ultimate immersive experience featuring touch screen tablets, rotating LED pillar displays, a selfie mirror, and more. Brands with an in-store presence can really make a statement this fall by incorporating fun elements to change up the retail experience - and the same goes for ecommerce brands. Gen Zs are able to seamlessly blend the real world with the digital world in their daily lives - and so can you.

## How do you prefer to shop during Black Friday?



## Sector snapshot

### HEALTH AND BEAUTY

**Health and beauty** is the third most popular sector to spend on during Black Friday according to Gen Zs - and they commonly like to browse beauty products in-stores. Budget health and beauty products might be easily obtainable, but Black Friday is the perfect chance for students to splash out on something luxurious. 54% of students said they plan to spend in this category this year, and 64% also plan to buy health and beauty items as a gift.

Workout gear, gym apps and protein products also frequently feature on the shopping lists of this fitness- focused generation. But it's not just fitness fanatics that soak up these deals - activewear is a big yes for Gen Z fashionistas, too.



# Marketing to Gen Z

So, now you've got the key trends for Black Friday 2021 down, here's a breakdown of our top tips for marketing to Gen Z students for the fall shopping period.

## Consider the recipients as well as the gifters

Some students will be branching out to new spending categories to buy for others, so it could be worth creating a gifting section via your social media, website, app or in your physical store to help navigate new customers around your offering.

## Incentivize, incentivize, incentivize

One way to really entice Gen Z students is through incentives. Brands are known to offer some of their best deals during Black Friday, but have you ever thought about offering stackable student discounts to really establish your brand as a go-to for young consumers?

## Where do you get ideas of things to buy during Black Friday?



## Build that momentum

Don't forget, Gen Zs like to prepare when it comes to exercising their spending power. The majority - 33% - start searching for deals a week before the big event, and 26% start at least 2-3 weeks before. Make sure your deals are promoted well in advance for the Gen Z world to see.

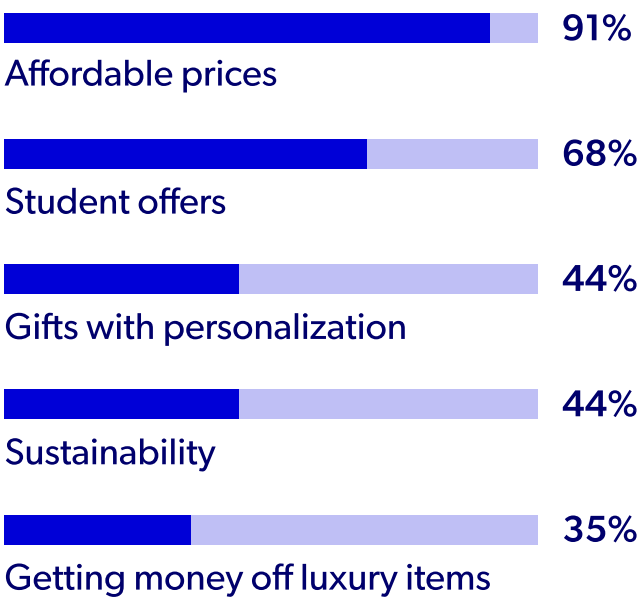
## Make social your new storefront

Social media marketing is a great way to reach this cohort and get a spot on their wishlists. Get Gen Zs talking on TikTok by posting product tutorials; make them an offer they can't resist sharing with their friends online; or make a statement on their Instagram timeline with sponsored posts and ads. 63% of students get ideas of things to buy via social media - whether you're a physical retailer, e-tailer or both, social media marketing is a no brainer when wanting to reach Gen Z.



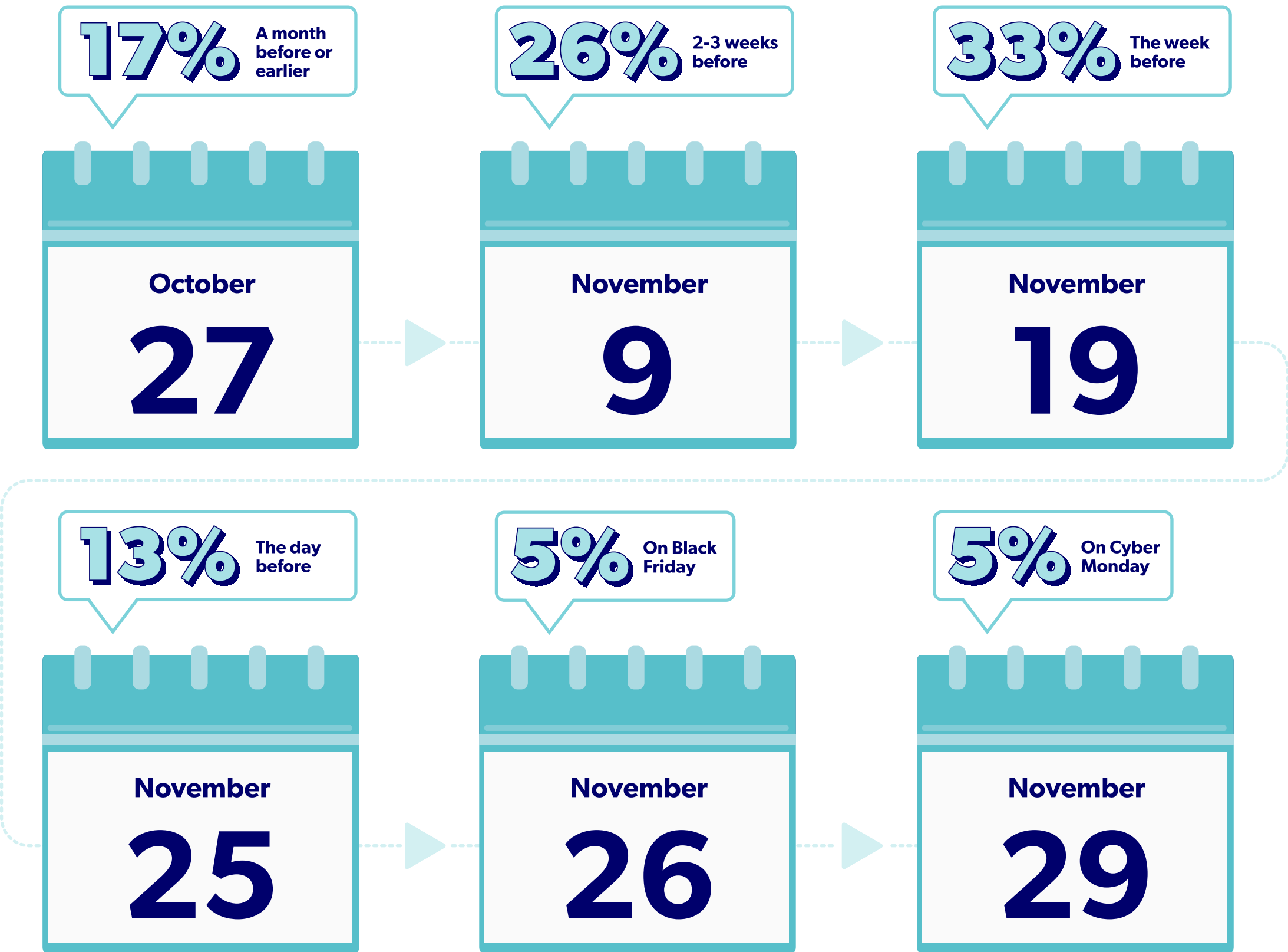


What are your priorities when you start shopping during the holidays?



“Stuff like Instagram and Twitter, which are the ones that I use the most - sometimes Pinterest, too - I look at those, especially the stuff that my friends are wearing. Social media has impacted a lot of my views and aesthetics.” - Kelly, Nursing student from Florida

How early do you start looking for Black Friday / Cyber Week deals?





# Success stories

Take a look at last year's hall of fame. Student Beans worked with these brands to grow their student engagement around Cyber Week, making them a 'must-have' brand among Gen Z students.

## PANDORA

**196%**

uplift in sales from  
the week before

**163%**

increase in revenue  
from the week before

**416%**

uplift in sales  
from 2019

**58,503**

codes issued during  
Cyber Week

Pandora is the perfect place for young consumers looking to spoil a loved one this Christmas - as well as those looking to treat themselves, of course. Indeed, last year's 'treat yourself' mentality was certainly reflected in the brand's results. Working with Student Beans, Pandora's Cyber Week sales increased by 676.64% from 2019, and the number of codes issued in 2020 increased by 379.06%.

The number of codes issued on Black Friday alone was 9,337.

Whether treating a loved one or themselves, we fully expect this mentality to remain relevant for the 2021 holiday season. After all, it's been a tough 18 months for students - they deserve it!



Having expanded into the US market in early 2020, Australian-based fashion retailer, Princess Polly, saw impressive results during their first US Cyber Week working with Student Beans. They offered a special 30% off for customers during the big event, and featured heavily on the Student Beans website with promotional banners. They also ran a pre-Cyber media campaign - proving that starting early is key for this retail event.

"Cyber Week 2020 was our biggest event to date – our biggest day, biggest week, biggest month in history. We were so far above our forecast and we definitely exceeded expectations. The US results absolutely blew our minds – we gained 1400% increase in sales, and 1200% increase in revenue. Student Beans were definitely a big part of our strategy." - Kim Zorn, Head of Performance at Princess Polly.

## PRINCESS POLLY

**890%**

uplift in codes from  
the week before

**1401%**

increase in sales from  
the week before

**1291%**

increase in revenue  
from the week before

**21,220**

codes issued during  
Cyber Weekend



# About Student Beans



## Your gateway to success with Gen Z

Student Beans creates lasting relationships between Gen Z and brands. Our suite of solutions help brands to find, attract, engage and convert verified students. And that's just the start. Our extensive network of global media touchpoints, along with our conversion optimization tools, drive repeat purchases, building the habits that turn Gen Z into your lifelong customers.

### Our conversion optimization tool

Reduce basket abandonment, and ensure that every discounted purchase comes from a fully verified student.

### Our Gen Z media suite

Make use of our Gen Z-centric media suite to speak to them wherever and however they browse.

### Our Gen Z database

Leverage our global Gen Z database to retarget more efficiently, earning loyalty that lasts way beyond their student years.

### Our global publisher network

Once your student discount program is live, we'll place it in front of the audiences that work for you.



## The story of Student Beans

Student Beans was founded in 2005 in Birmingham, UK, by James and Michael Eder. Today, we partner with thousands of the world's biggest brands across fashion, technology, food, entertainment and more, and power a global network of students in over 160 countries.

Find out more about our [conversion optimization tool and Gen Z media suite](#) today.



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