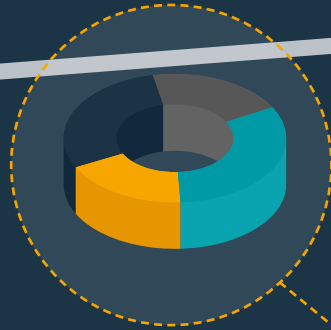




The UK  
Ecommerce  
Association



# Black Friday and Christmas Review 2023



# Contents

Meet the experts	<b>4</b>
Methodology	<b>5</b>
IMRG's Black Friday forecast	<b>6</b>
Expectations for November performance	6
Expectations for Black Friday week	7
The results	<b>8</b>
November performance	8
Black Friday week performance	9
Black Friday week daily performance	10
Black Friday daily performance 2022 VS 2023	11
Product category performance	<b>12</b>
Forecast vs actual category performance	12
Product category key takeaways	13

# Contents - continued

<b>Campaign launch dates and trends</b>	<b>14</b>
Is Black Friday starting earlier?	14
The difference in launch dates 2022 VS 2023	15
Is there monetary value in starting earlier?	16
Early access trends unveiled	17
<b>The approaches to discounting</b>	<b>18</b>
The types of discounts offered	18
The most common discount values	19
Why are retailers providing discount rules?	20
<b>The impact of the cost-of-living crisis</b>	<b>21</b>
Did the use of Buy Now, Pay Later increase?	21
Did the cost-of-living crisis contribute to Cyber Monday's success?	22
Average basket value and conversion rate trends	24
<b>Christmas and Boxing Day sales</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Contact page</b>	<b>27</b>



# Meet the experts



## About

We help our members understand and improve their online retail performance through a busy programme of performance benchmarking, data analysis, insight, best practice-sharing, and events. We have been tracking online sales since 2000 – and now measure over 120 individual metrics in a series of indexes, providing in-depth intelligence on online and mobile sales, delivery trends, marketing ROI and channel performance.

## Editorial:



Ellie-Rose Davies, Content Executive at **IMRG**



Matthew Walsh, Data & Retail Director at **IMRG**



Milita Bani, Assistant Analyst at **IMRG**



## About

SheerID is the global leader in identity verification for commerce. With SheerID, brands identify and acquire customers from highly valued consumer communities — such as students, teachers, and first responders — with personalised offers through loyalty programs, digital wallets, and more, that are gated by instant verification from the largest set of authoritative data worldwide. SheerID verifies more than 2.5 billion people via 200,000 authoritative data sources to increase sales while mitigating fraud, provides global insights from hundreds of the world's leading brands, and never shares or sells customer data.

## Editorial:



Francois Rychlewski, Vice President of Sales, EMEA at **SheerID**

# Methodology

Each year IMRG tracks UK online retailers' Black Friday performance to create a comprehensive report that dives into the key takeaways and trends for the ecommerce community. Retailers can use this report to help inform their future Black Friday strategies.

There are three streams of data used throughout this report. The first being data from IMRG's Online Retail Index which is representative of 200+ retailers and £26bn+. The second stream of data is from IMRG's Daily Black Friday Tracker which reveals daily performance for around 140 retailers during Black Friday week (including Cyber Monday) 2023. The final stream of data comes from analysing over 360 retail sites during November to see trends such as campaign launch dates. For this report we looked at 295 retailers of this sample to provide a 3-year match.

Some retailers from the tracker also provided answers to follow-up questions we had after we received their Black Friday 2023 data. The questions were designed to establish Cyber Monday, early access, and BNPL trends.

The Online Retail Index's study of Black Friday is from 19th Nov until 25th Nov, whereas the Black Friday tracker reveals data for 20th Nov until 21st Nov to include Cyber Monday. For further clarity on week classifications please see the table on this page.

### Content covered by the Index:

- November monthly performance
- November weekly performance (19th – 25th)

### Content covered by the tracker:

- Black Friday week performance (20th – 27th)
- Black Friday daily performance

### A note on week classifications

■ **Index week:** 19-25 November (7 days)

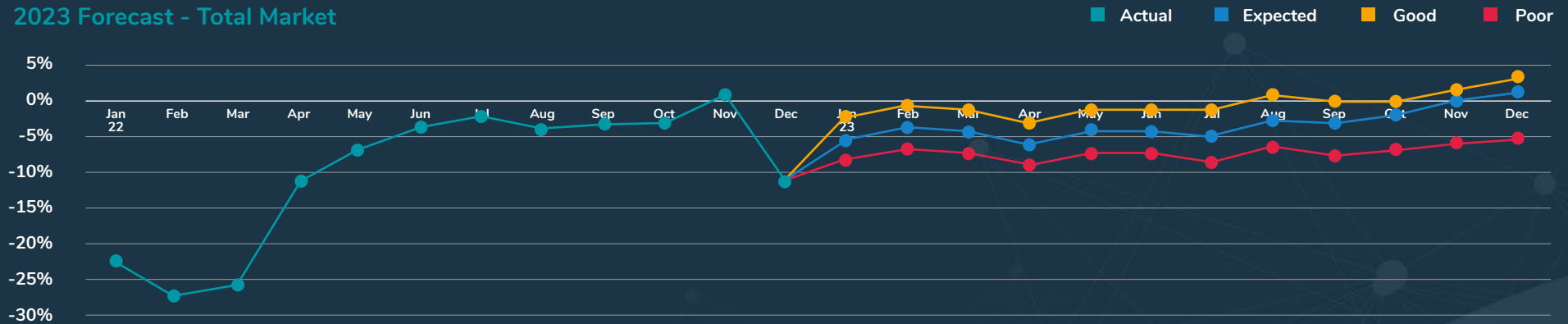
■ **Black Friday week:** 20-27 November (8 days)

19 Nov	20 Nov	21 Nov	22 Nov	23 Nov	24 Nov	25 Nov	26 Nov	27 Nov

# IMRG's Black Friday Forecast

## Expectations for November performance

### 2023 Forecast - Total Market



At the beginning of 2023, IMRG released a forecast for Year-on-Year (YoY) online retail revenue performance. The factors that we considered when creating the 2023 forecast included:

- Historic performance of UK ecommerce market
- Covid-19 annualisation skews now gone
- Inflationary pressures, cost of living, and energy prices
- Highstreet performance
- Economic predictions from investment banks

With all of this in mind, we anticipated that 2023 would be a strenuous year for retail (see 'expected' line on the chart) and, despite the noise of Black Friday, we predicted that November would experience flat growth (0% YoY).

Acknowledging the flat, just edging positive, growth reported in November 2022 (+0.2% YoY), a year also filled with cost-of-living skews and knowing that as of October 2023 had presented 9 months of negative YoY growth, our expectations for November did not waver.

Also, with astounding revenue growth seen during the pandemic (e.g., Nov 2020: +34.6% YoY), it created tough Year-on-Year comparators, with growth now incredibly difficult to maintain or achieve.

**IMRG's Prediction For November Performance, 2023: 0% YoY.**



## Expectations for Black Friday week

IMRG predicted that Black Friday week (Mon 20th – Mon 27th Nov) would be down -2% YoY in 2023.

- 2021: -10% (actual)
- + 2022: +0.3% (actual)
- **2023: -2% (expected)**

Black Friday week in 2021 saw a significant decline (-10%) and 2022 saw only a 0.3 percentage point increase. With multiple factors toying with Black Friday success in 2023, growth, even for the busiest trading week of the year, was an unlikely occurrence for most retailers.



# The Results

## November Performance

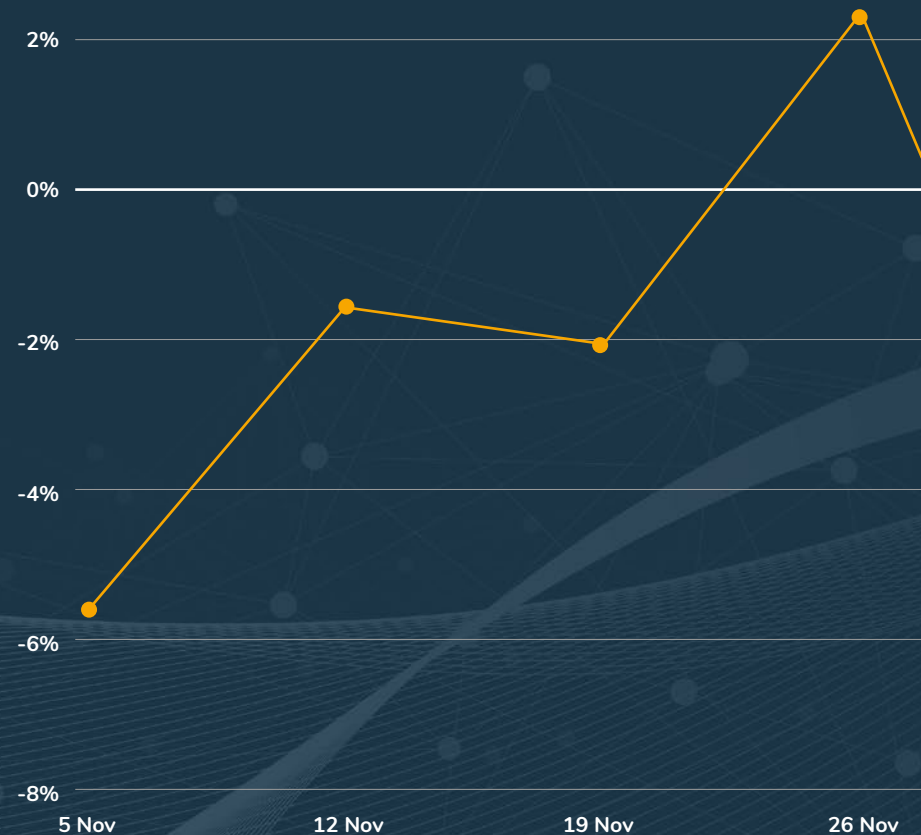
After predicting no growth for the total market, it was no surprise that online revenue performance in November was down -1.6% YoY<sup>1</sup>. Though, given the fragility of the market, there are a few things that suggest performance could have been worse.

One of the bright spots for November performance is that the final week (w/c 26th) posted a +2.4% YoY increase and marked one of the best weeks of the year so far in IMRG's Online Retail Index. It is worth noting that this was the single positive week of the month, and hints to customers' fear of missing out (FOMO).

From a Month-on-Month (MoM) perspective<sup>2</sup>, retailers can be assured that the peak season is still the best time for online trading. Revenue increased by +52.9% MoM in November relative to October and was noticeably the best MoM figure recorded for November since 2020.

**November was down -1.6% YoY!**

YoY Percentage Change For Revenue, November 2023



This data: YoY Percentage Change for Revenue weekly November

<sup>1</sup> November performance was calculated using IMRG's Online Retail Index.

<sup>2</sup> Definition: The Month-on-Month (MoM) metric is how 'this month' performed compared to 'last month.'



## Black Friday Week Performance

The Week-on-Week (WoW)<sup>1</sup> metric shows that Black Friday week (19th – 25th) performed in line with 2022, albeit 1.2 percentage points down, at +41.4%. Yet, these figures are lower than the +50.3% achieved in 2021 and takes us much further from a decade ago when customers would run havoc across stores that week to grab bargains.

The headline result from the Daily Black Friday Tracker revealed that Black Friday week, from Mon-Mon to include Cyber Monday, was down by -1.9% YoY – this is perfectly in line with our forecast of -2% YoY!

- 2021: -10% (actual)
- + 2022: +0.3% (actual)
- ✓ **2023: -1.9% (actual)**

**Black Friday week** was down -1.9% YoY, just 0.1 percentage points from IMRG's forecast!

<sup>1</sup>The Week-on-Week (WoW) metric is how 'this week' performed compared to 'last week.'



## Black Friday Week Daily Performance

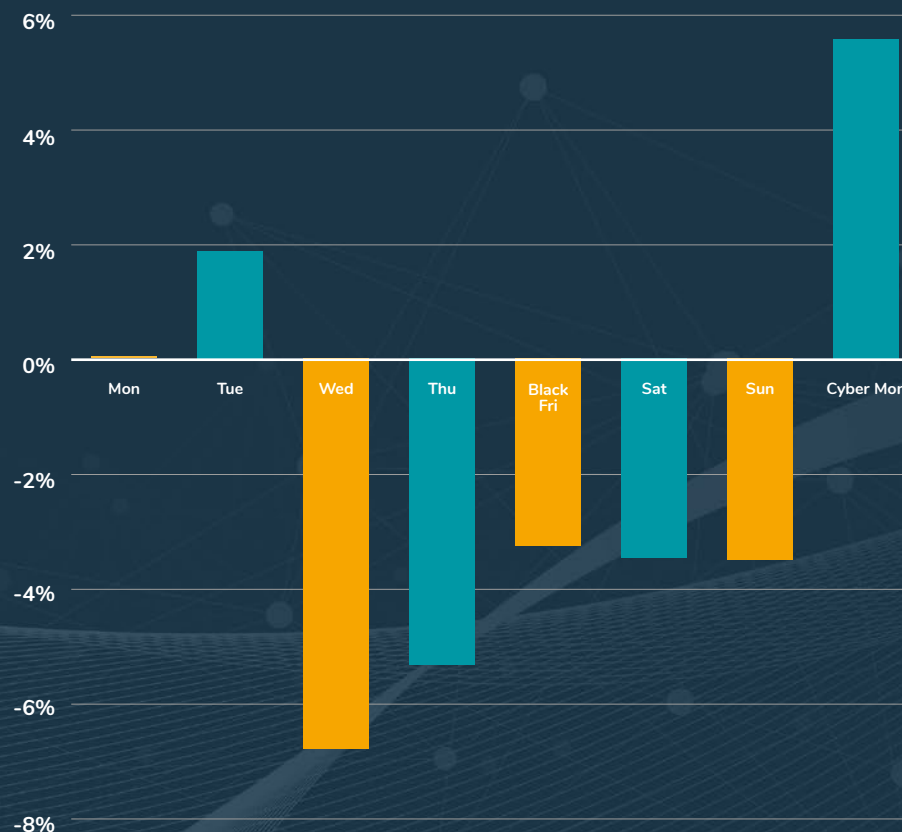
While the overall week was down -1.9% YoY, IMRG's Daily Black Friday Tracker shows that the week had a couple of positive days. These were Tuesday (+1.9% YoY) and Cyber Monday (+5.6% YoY), with the latter almost single handedly saving the week.

Monday 20th November was flat (0%) and brought hope for growth, of which Tuesday fulfilled. Then came Wednesday, Thursday, Black Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, all of which experienced stealthy declines, with Wednesday seeing the sharpest decline of -6.8% YoY.

The success of Cyber Monday (+5.6% YoY) over that of Black Friday (-3.3% YoY) speaks to patterns in consumer spending, with many customers making a conscious choice to wait out Black Friday sales until after pay day.

Knowing the value of Cyber Monday, retailers might wish to ensure that they have enough stock of their most popular items all the way until the end of the month. To manage these pressures, and to avoid disappointed customers, retailers can use stock level messaging on the product page that signals the item quantity left.

Black Friday Week Performance



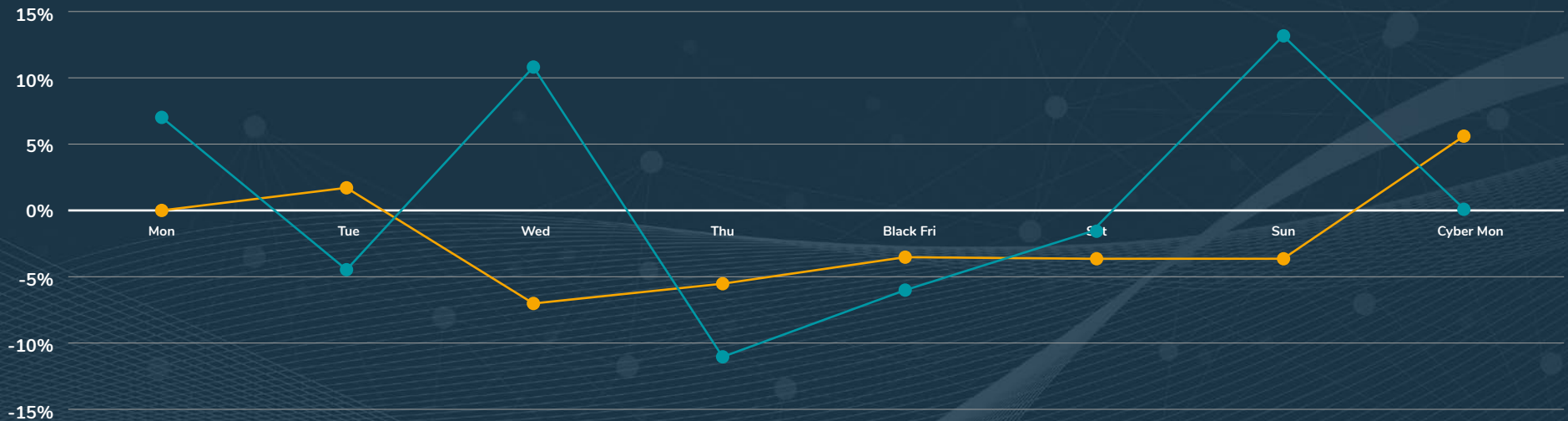
## Black Friday Daily Performance 2022 VS 2023

Interestingly, 2022 saw three good days of trading compared to just two in 2023 (see chart). These three good days included Monday, Wednesday and Sunday which saw +7.1%, +11%, and +13.1% YoY growth. The negative figures recorded on these days in 2023 balance out the score and reveal a satisfactory 2-year performance.

Black Friday experienced negative against negative growth relative to 2022, yet the positive aspect is that the Year-on-Year decline (-3.3%) was not so steep this year.

### Black Friday Week Performance 2022/23

■ 2022 ■ 2023





# Product category performance

## Forecast VS Actual Category Performance

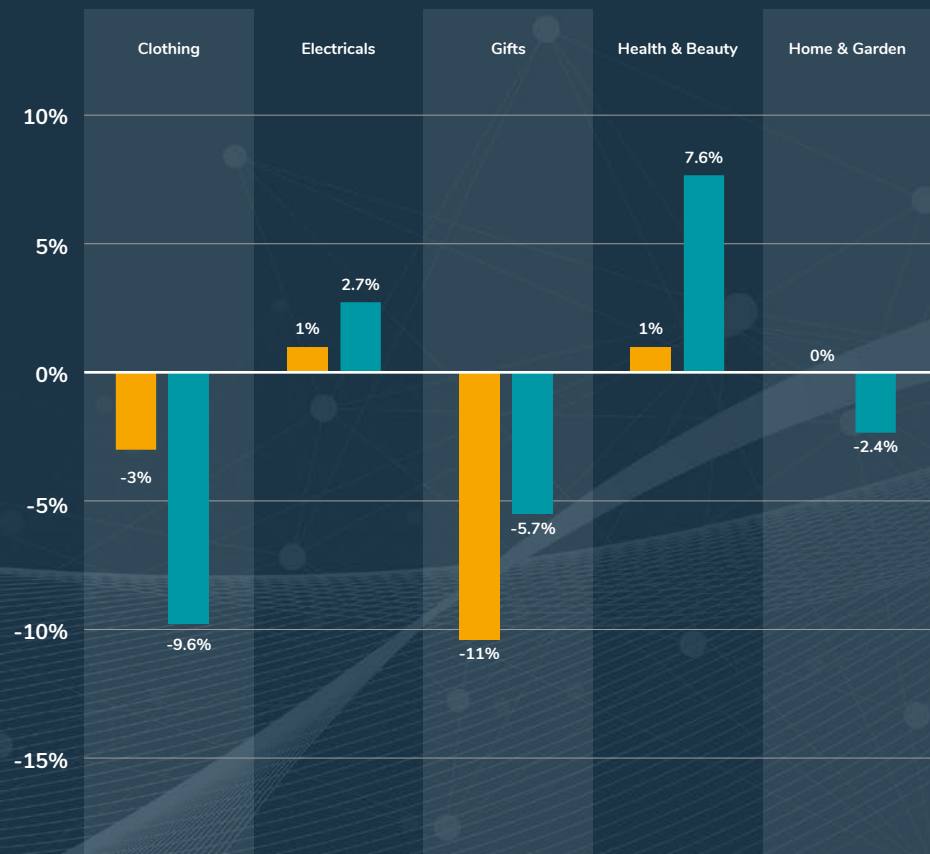
Across all the major product categories tracked by IMRG, Black Friday week (Mon – Mon) had a mixed performance. The chart on this page reveals what we forecasted for clothing, electricals, gifts, health & beauty, and home & garden retailers versus what actually happened.

The categories that performed worse than expected were clothing (-9.6% YoY) and home & garden (-2.4% YoY). Clothing reported a much steeper decline than anticipated, but this did not come as a surprise given the consistent declines reported across the category throughout 2023.

The categories that performed better than expected and experienced YoY growth were electricals (+2.7% YoY) and health & beauty (+7.6% YoY), which was the top performing category of Black Friday 2023. These two categories also experienced growth and outperformed expectations in 2022.

Lastly, gifts, which, while performing better than expected, experienced a decline of -5.7% YoY. Customers may have cut down their Christmas present budget or have reduced the number of people they are buying presents for. Nonetheless, this figure is against +6.1% YoY recorded in 2022, which was the highest revenue performance across the categories that year.

Forecast VS Actual - Product Categories Cumulative YoY growth Mon-Mon, 2023



## Product Category Key Takeaways

### Clothing:

- Black Friday (24th) YoY: **-7.1%**
- Cumulative YoY growth Mon to Mon: **-9.6%**
- Budget: **+1.1%**, mid-market: **-13.9%**, premium **+8.2%** YoY
- Best day of the week: Cyber Monday (**-0.3%** YoY)
- Worst day of the week: Wednesday (**-18.5%** YoY)
- Best sub-category: Footwear (**-3.8%**)
- 6 of the largest 10 retailers experienced growth
- Average conversion rate for 8-day period: **4.1%**
- Average order value: £84 (**+21%** YoY)

### Electricals:

- Black Friday (24th) YoY: **-1%**
- Cumulative YoY growth Mon to Mon: **+2.7%**
- Best day of the week: Monday (**+14%** YoY)
- Worst day of the week: Thursday (**-6.8%** YoY)
- Best sub-category: Audio (**+13.6%** YoY) – driven by ear pods
- Out of the 10 largest retailers **50%** saw growth
- **70%** of retailers started their BF campaign by 2nd Nov

### Gifts:

- Black Friday (24th) YoY: **-8.9%** YoY
- Cumulative YoY growth Mon to Mon: **-5.7%** YoY
- Best day of the week: Tuesday (**+8.4%** YoY)
- Worst day of the week: Thursday (**-15.1%** YoY)
- Highest day for traffic: Monday (**+9.1%** YoY)

### Health & Beauty:

- Black Friday (24th) YoY: **-4.2%**
- Cumulative YoY growth Mon to Mon: **-7.6%**
- Budget: **+4.3%**, mid-market: **+6.2%**, premium **+35.2%** YoY
- Best day of the week: Monday (**+14%** YoY)
- Worst day of the week: Thursday (**-6.8%** YoY)
- Best sub-category: Skincare (**+26%** YoY)
- 7 of the largest 10 retailers experienced growth
- Average conversion rate for 8-day period: **7.2%**

### Home & Garden

- Black Friday (24th) YoY: **-4.1%**
- Cumulative YoY growth Mon to Mon: **-2.4%** YoY
- Budget: **+0.9%**, mid-market: **-7.7%**, premium: **+0.6%** YoY
- Best day of the week: Cyber Monday (**-0.3%** YoY)
- Worst day of the week: Thursday (**-5.4%** YoY)
- Best sub-category (across all categories): Garden furnishings (**+26%** YoY)
- 9 of the largest 10 retailers experienced declines
- Average conversion rate for 8-day period: **2.8%** (same as 2022)
- Average order value: £169 (**-23%** YoY)

# Campaign launch dates and trends

## Is Black Friday starting earlier?

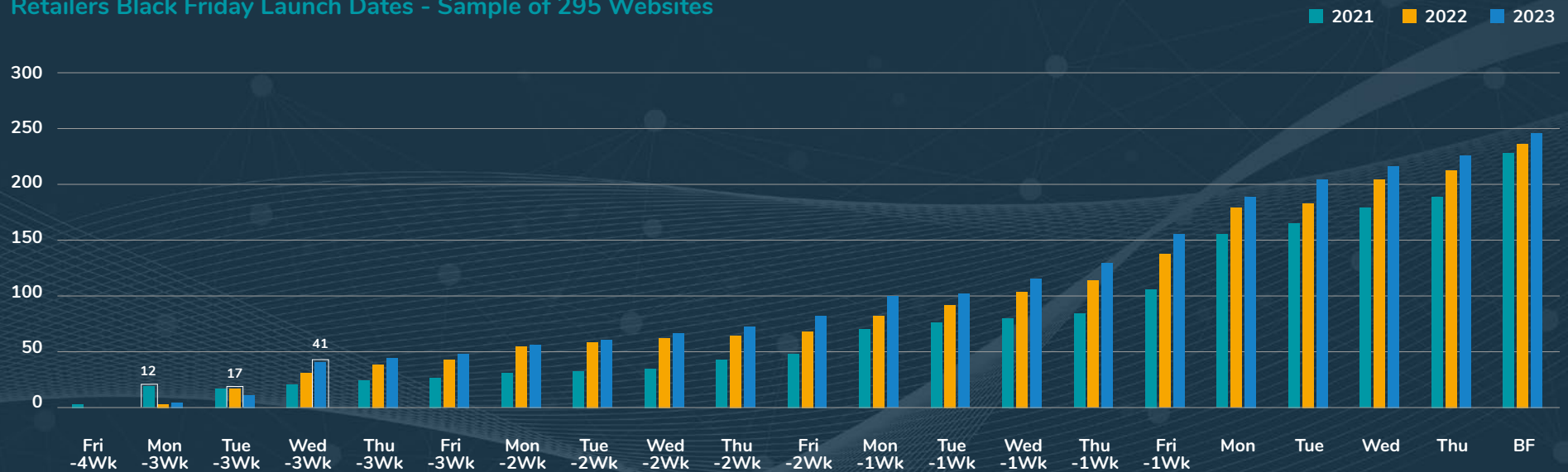
While some retailers still begin their campaigns during Black Friday week, the general trend is that most retailers are spreading their campaign throughout the entire month of November.

On the chart you will find three bars highlighted which represent the 1st November in 2021, 2022, and 2023. As you can see, the number of retailers with a live Black Friday campaign on this date has increased, from 12 to 17 and to a staggering 41 in 2023.

Retailers have truly become aware of the ever-growing trend of early campaigning and are subsequently following suit.

18 out of the 21 weeks recorded in this chart had higher launch dates in 2023, which highlights that Black Friday holds its prominence in the retail landscape.

Retailers Black Friday Launch Dates - Sample of 295 Websites





## The difference in launch dates 2022 VS 2023

53% of 295 retailers started their campaigns earlier this year compared to 2022, and the average increase, including the weekend, was five days. Just 16% (versus 25% in 2022) of the sample started their campaigns later this year and the average decrease was 5 days. This year fewer retailers kept their campaign launch date the same (20% in 2022 versus 8% in 2023), implying more experimentation this year.

The average length of Black Friday campaigns in 2023 was 13 days, being a 2 day increase from 2022.

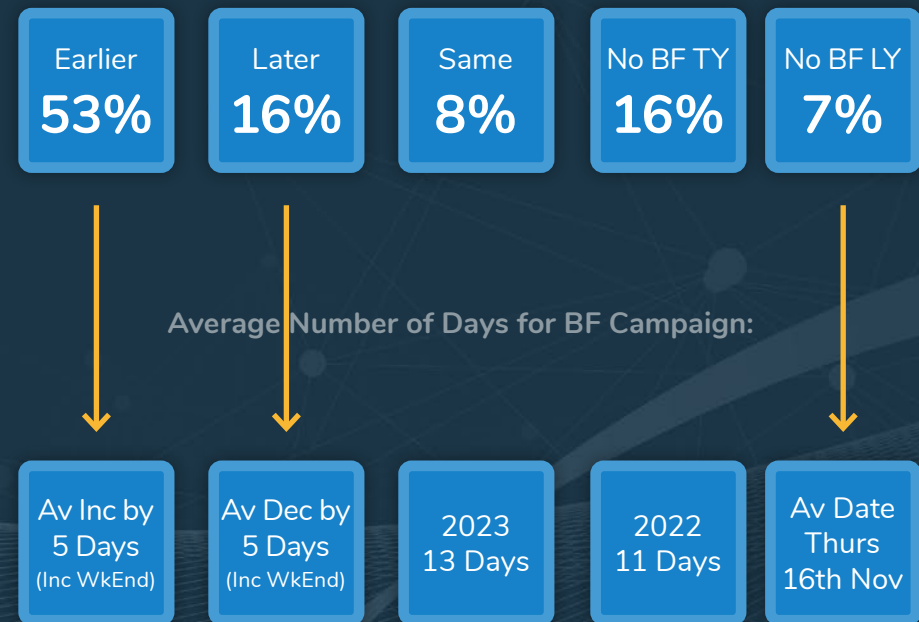
A small but still considerable 16% of retailers decided to not participate in Black Friday in 2023. 7% of retailers who did not participate last year did so this year, and of those the average start date was Thursday 16th November, proving that they're a group less likely to offer month long sales.

### SheerID comments:

*“ Regardless of when holiday shopping deals begin or end, the entire season - including the return period in January - is an opportunity for retailers,”* said Francois Rychlewski, Vice President of Sales, EMEA at SheerID.

*“ The holiday shopping period is a great time for retailers to entice shoppers with additional offers on top of the holiday deals they're already receiving and personalize those deals by tying them to a core aspect of the consumer that they're proud of, like their professional or educational status,”* said Rychlewski.

### Black Friday Campaign Launch Timings for 2023 Vs 2022 - Sample of 295 Retailers



## Is there monetary value in having a longer campaign?

One of our aims was to discover whether a longer campaign is simply stretching the same level of demand that you would get in one week over the course of many weeks, or whether it actually generates incremental revenue for retailers. From a sample of 67 retailers, we were able to draw conclusions by comparing the percentage increase of their campaign length (YoY) against the percentage of their revenue change (YoY).

The star performers are the retailers who opted for a longer campaign. Yet, while 4 out of every 5 retailers made more money by extending their campaign (with an average increase of +43% YoY), this reveals 19% of retailers who had longer campaigns that saw less revenue. The skill for retailers, then, is to ensure that they are one of the 81%, and this is where the utilisation of their trading expertise is essential. There should be focus on fine tuning the likes of their ad expenditure, email campaigns, discount offer, product range, etc.

While most retailers made more revenue by running a longer campaign, the trick is to ensure that they're smart enough to make more profit.

### SHORTER CAMPAIGN

**29%**

of Retailers will make **MORE** revenue

**Av inc of 17% YOY**

### SAME CAMPAIGN

**56%**

of Retailers will make **MORE** revenue

**Av inc of 15% YOY**

### LONG CAMPAIGN

**81%**

of Retailers will make **MORE** revenue

**Av inc of 43% YOY**

## Early access trends unveiled

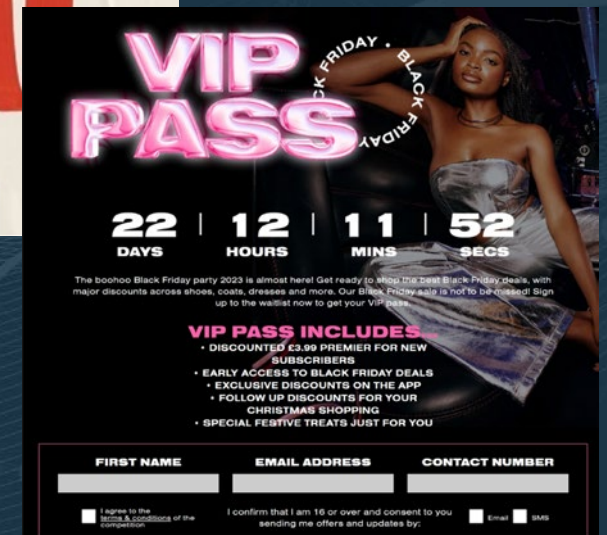
Each day of November we tracked 295 retailers' activity and noted that just under 65 retailers (22%) offered some kind of early Black Friday message or offering on their website. These included:

- Black Friday warm-up
- Early access
- Early bird
- Black Friday preview
- Black Friday is coming

We saw lots of retailers using similar messaging on their social media. One example being a clothing retailer who on the 12th November released a story on Instagram that said 'Black Friday coming soon. Be the first to know when deals drop! Plus win £150.' They incorporated gamification (a prize draw) with sign-ups for early access, and with these extra sign-ups, they improved their chances for customer acquisition and loyalty.

Similarly, a fragrance retailer exclaimed 'Win a 2k perfume bundle. Two prizes up for grabs,' on their Instagram story that day, further emphasising the value of gamification to incentivise purchases early on in November.

A considerable number of retailers offered early access exclusively to app members, or they offered early access on their website but even better deals on their app. We saw a couple of other retailers using VIP experiences, where customers had to sign-up to receive a code or pass for early access.





# The approaches to discounting

## The types of discounts offered

'Selected products up to' (43%) was the most popular type of discount offered this Black Friday. The 'up to' discounts are most appealing as these percentages are often much higher and subsequently more attractive to the customer. To improve site conversion, retailers can use their customer data to understand where their discounts are best placed.

The second most popular discount was 'selected products fixed discount' (21%), and joint third was 'site wide up to' and 'site wide fixed discount' (18%).

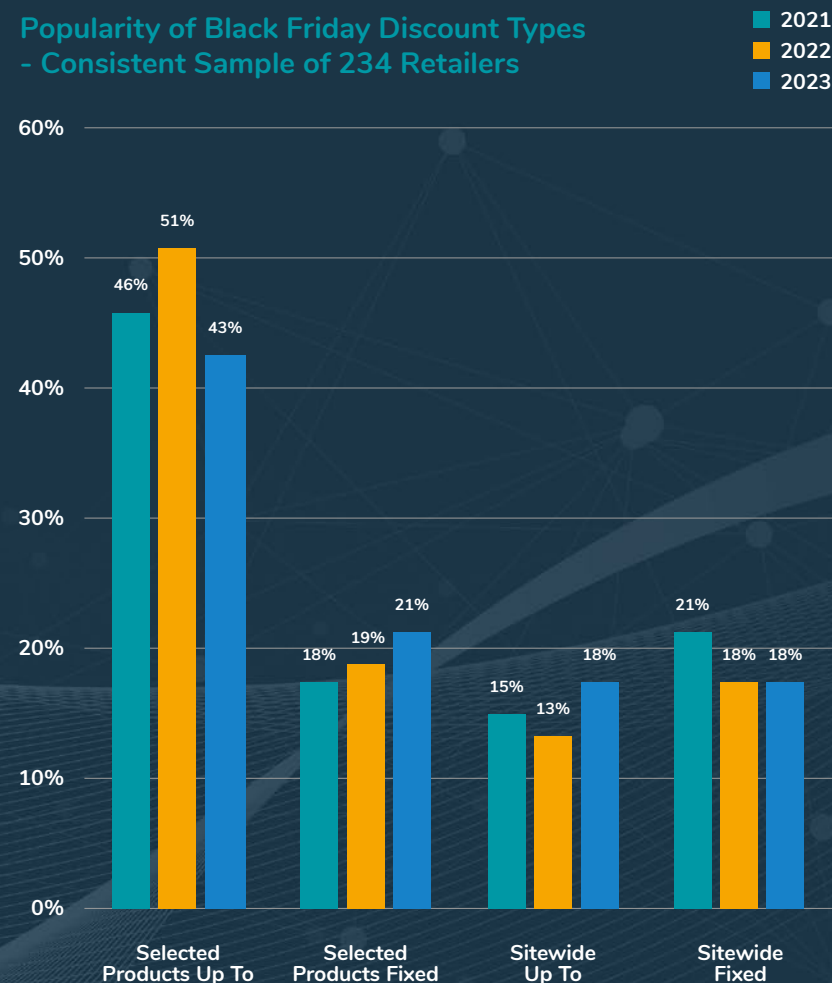
The 'selected products up to' has always been the most popular discount offering during Black Friday. The sitewide offerings are the ones that vary in popularity year by year, whereas fixed doesn't tend to move very much.

### SheerID comments:

*"Retailers can use gated offers requiring the customer to verify their professional or educational status in exchange for a deal, to gain the customer's permission to continue to share exclusive offers with them based on that status,"* said Rychlewski.

*"Turning the holiday shopping season into an opportunity to offer customers additional deals through gated, personalised offers, while also ensuring their in-store and online experience is convenient and seamless whenever and wherever they interact with your brand - even if it's to return or exchange a holiday gift they received - is the key to gaining and retaining loyal customers far beyond the holiday shopping season."*

Popularity of Black Friday Discount Types  
- Consistent Sample of 234 Retailers



## The most common discount values

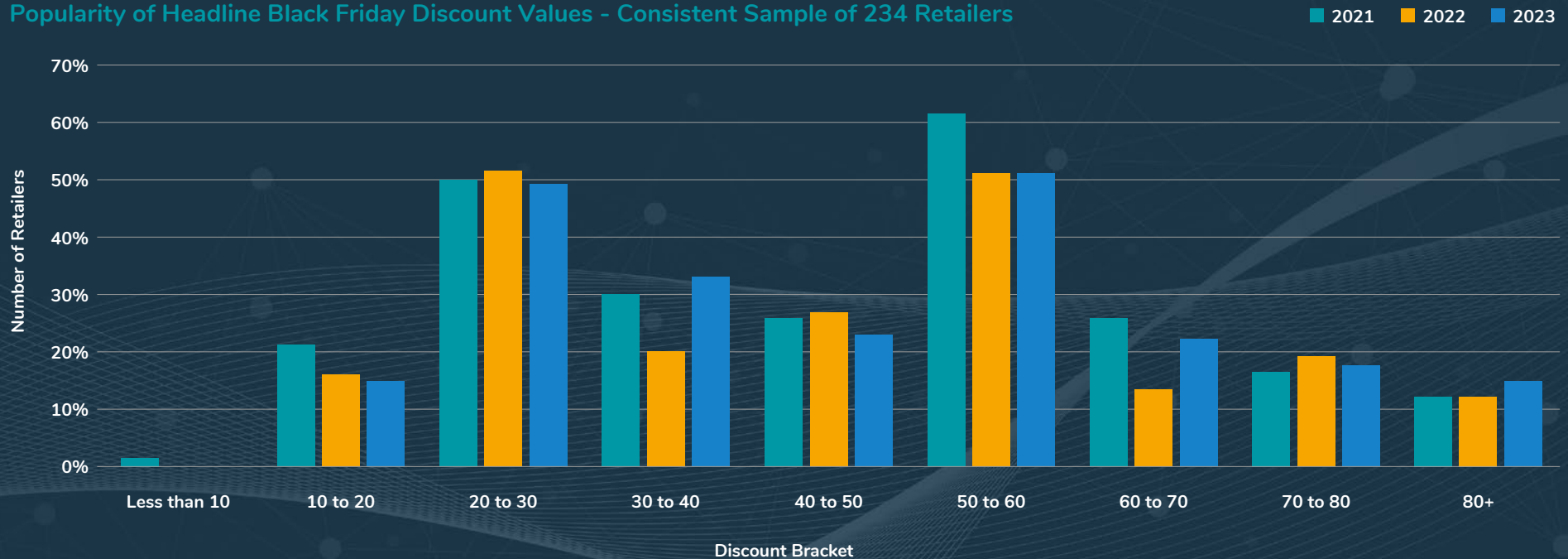
Both 20 to 30% and 50 to 60% are the most popular discount values year after year. The second most common discounts are between 30 to 40% and 60 to 70%. These discounts are generous and signify attempted competitive advantage.

There has been an increase in the number of retailers who offer 80%+ discounts, however, this is the second to least popular choice signalling that retailers do not need to feel the pressure to offer an

excessive headline discount during Black Friday. On the opposite end of the chart, you have a similar number of retailers who offered 10 to 20% off, but the rate at which retailers offer discounts in this bracket is declining.

There were no retailers that offered a discount less than 10% in either 2022 or 2023.

Popularity of Headline Black Friday Discount Values - Consistent Sample of 234 Retailers



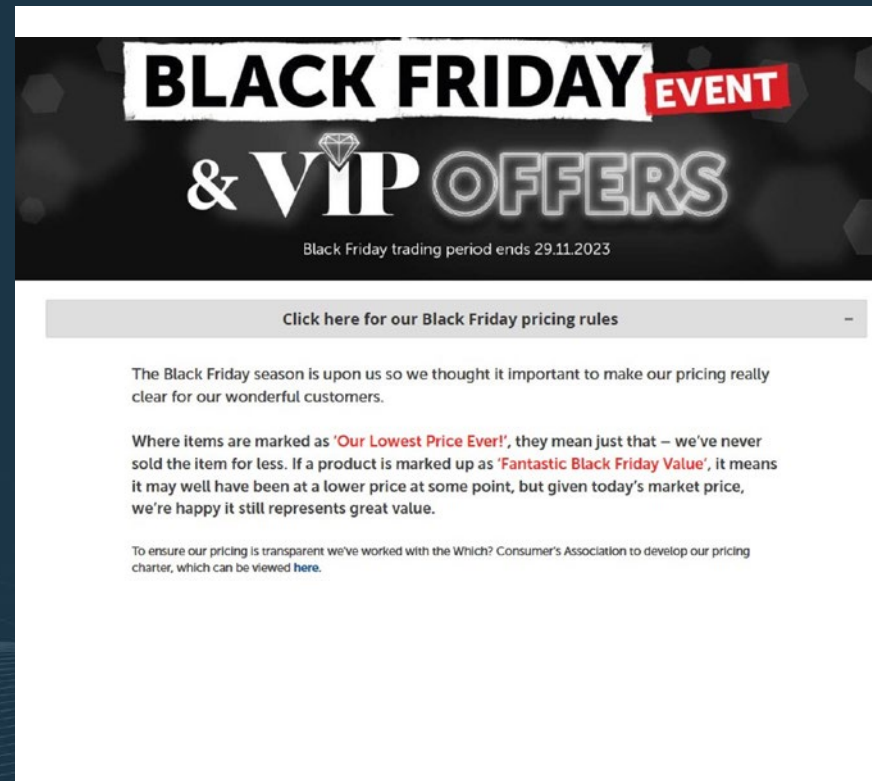
## Why are retailers providing discount rules?

Each year, the press releases statements concerning the “fraudulent nature of Black Friday,” stating, for example, that the deals are not as good as they exclaim to be. This has led to an increase in the number of retailers who feel the need to justify their prices and protect their reputation.

Some retailers have started to include discount rules on their website which display the definition of a price promise, price match, and ‘best ever deal,’ marking each discounted product with these titles. Electrical and catalogue retailers commonly use this approach.

Price promises are commonly used in early access messaging to let customers know that the percentage of discount will not increase on Black Friday. Subsequently, retailers boost their conversion rates as fewer customers will abandon their search or basket hoping for a better deal down the line.

The ‘best ever deal’ rule is clever because customers have learned to become wary of those retailers making big discount statements. For many retailers, debunking myths around the legitimacy of Black Friday can be integral to success.



**BLACK FRIDAY** **EVENT**

**& VIP OFFERS**

Black Friday trading period ends 29.11.2023

[Click here for our Black Friday pricing rules](#)

The Black Friday season is upon us so we thought it important to make our pricing really clear for our wonderful customers.

Where items are marked as '**Our Lowest Price Ever!**', they mean just that – we've never sold the item for less. If a product is marked up as '**Fantastic Black Friday Value**', it means it may well have been at a lower price at some point, but given today's market price, we're happy it still represents great value.

To ensure our pricing is transparent we've worked with the Which? Consumer's Association to develop our pricing charter, which can be viewed [here](#).



# The impact of the cost-of-living crisis

## Did the use of Buy Now, Pay Later increase?

One of the greatest factors that influenced customer demand online throughout 2023 was the cost-of-living crisis, of which has permeated into 2024. IMRG research from July 2023 revealed that 58.7% of 1000 customers look for discounted items more compared to when the cost-of-living crisis hit the UK (pre-2022), and 11.6% are more likely to use Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) services.

We asked 40 retailers from our Daily Black Friday tracker to provide some insight into their BNPL trends to see if there was greater appeal for this service on Black Friday (24th Nov). The average share of revenue from BNPL transactions increased from 8% in 2022 to 9% in 2023, suggesting a similar, and very slightly increased, level of demand this year.

70% of retailers reported a higher share of revenue from BNPL transactions throughout 2023, and 50% of those were clothing retailers; customers may feel more comfortable using BNPL for cheaper items that they know they can more easily pay off later. It could also be that clothing retailers are more likely to offer this service and advertise it on their website.

Average Share  
Of Revenue From  
Buy Now, Pay Later  
Transactions 27th Nov

2022

8%

Average Share  
Of Revenue From  
Buy Now, Pay Later  
Transactions 27th Nov

2023

9%

### Did the cost-of-living crisis contribute to Cyber Monday's success?

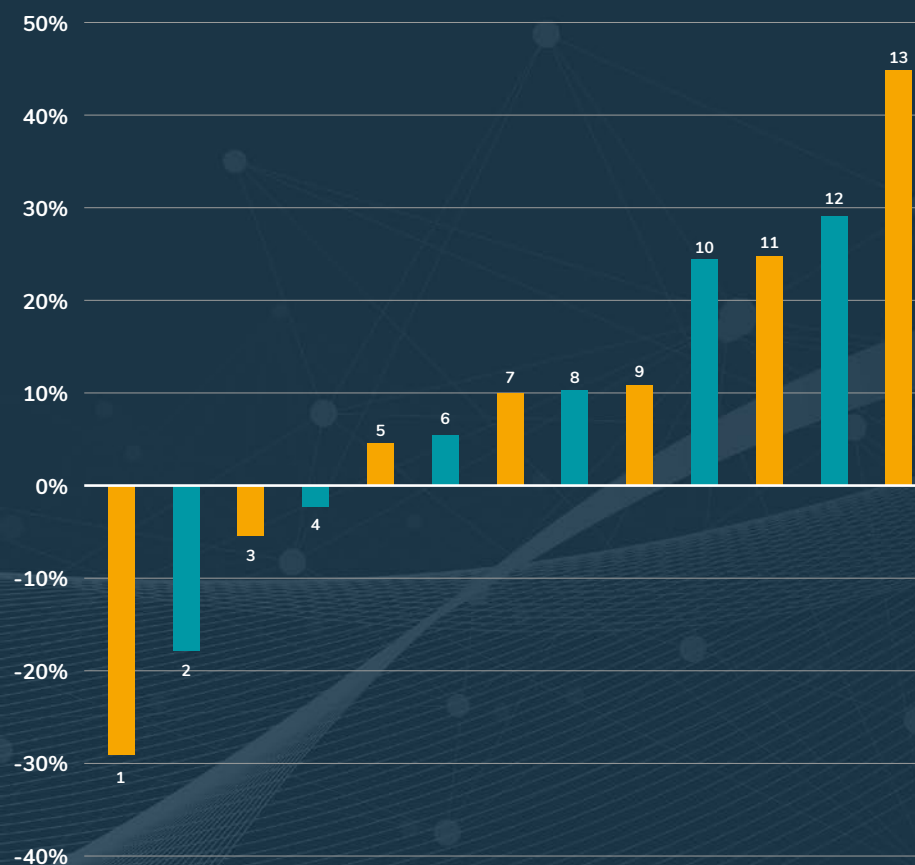
During a cost-of-living crisis, there will be less people who have ample money to spend at the end of the month before pay day. Given that Black Friday was even earlier this year, and that a proportion of the workforce would have been paid on Cyber Monday, we can theorise that pay day contributed to Cyber Monday's success (+5.6% YoY).

Customers are also aware that Black Friday deals run all the way to Cyber Monday and may believe that they will get bigger discounts on this date as retailers try to rid their Black Friday stock.

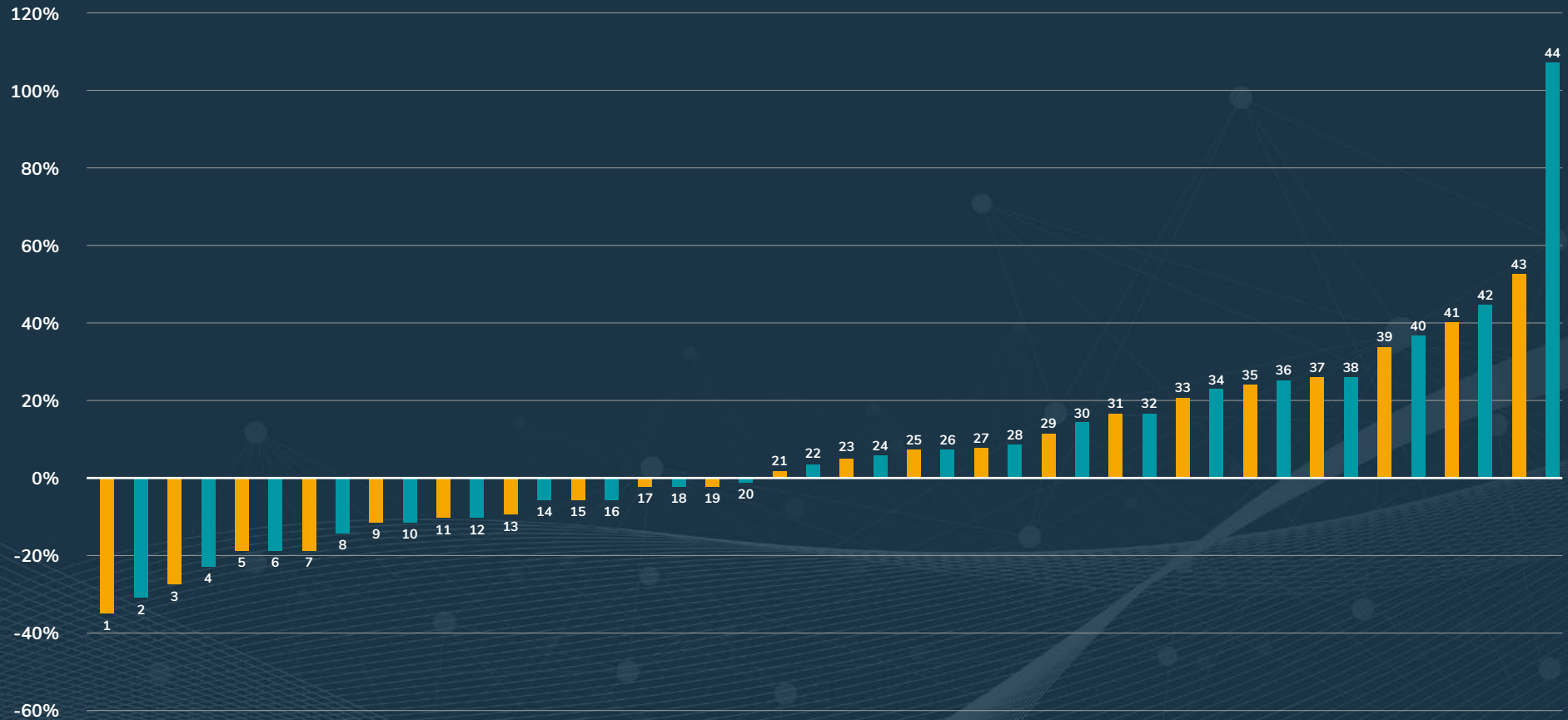
However, while customers may have waited for improved discounts or product ranges on Cyber Monday, the reality is most retailers kept their promotions the same. Also, there was no pattern to suggest that revenue performance was much better for retailers who implemented changes or for those who kept promotions the same (par one retailer who kept their promotion the same and excelled, achieving +100%+ YoY on Cyber Monday).

Another likely reason for Cyber Monday's success is that over the weekend it got very cold for the first time. The clothing category experienced flat growth (-0.3% YoY) on this day, whereas the rest of the week had been down by over -10% YoY. Revenue would have improved for these retailers as it is a primary time to sell their winter ranges, with big deals on expensive items such as coats. Electrical retailers saw growth on Cyber Monday (+7.5% YoY), and would have benefited from selling energy efficient products, such as electric blankets.

YoY revenue growth for retailers who increased the discount or range of products in their offer for CM VS BF, 2023



YoY revenue growth for retailers who kept their BF and CM promotions the same, 2023





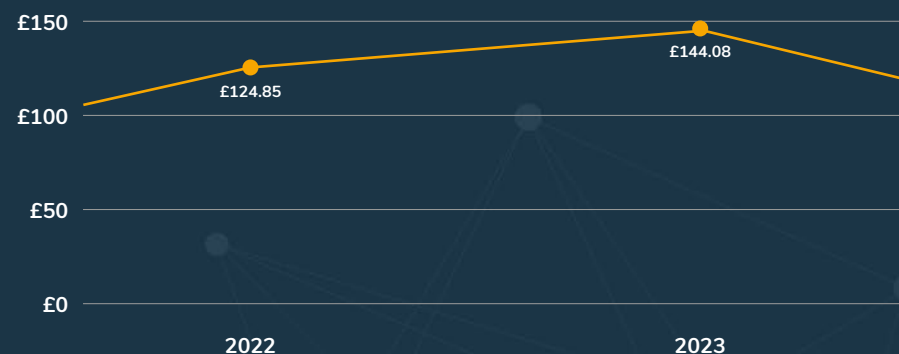
## Average basket value and conversion rate trends

The average basket value (ABV) for w/c 20th November 2022 in IMRG's Online Retail Index was £124.85. Fast forward to w/c 19th November 2023, and the ABV was £144.08, marking a yearly increase of £19.23.

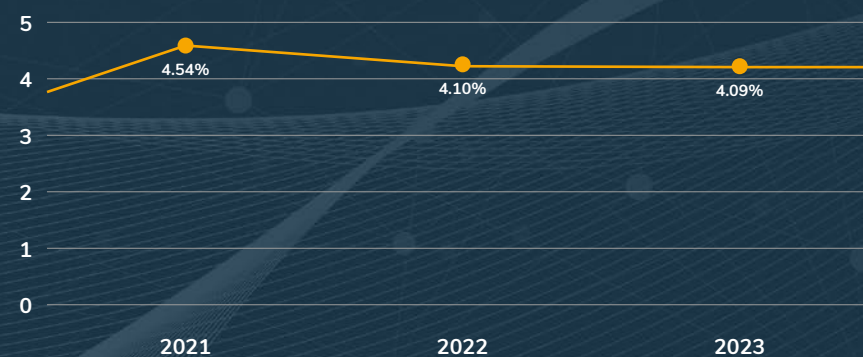
However, the average conversion rate (total sessions) dropped by 0.1 percentage points in Black Friday week 2023 (4.09%) compared to Black Friday week 2022 (4.10%). In 2021, before the cost-of-living crisis hit, the average conversion rate that week was 4.54%. So, while ABV is increasing, conversion is down. While there are plenty of reasons for this, the most likely are:

- **Products have got more expensive:** With the rising costs in many areas of business, retailers have shifted some of their costs onto their customers.
- **Quality over quantity:** In a cost-of-living crisis, customers may be more inclined to opt for quality and longevity with more expensive products, rather than cheaper, more affordable, and easier to break products.
- **Bulk buying becomes popular:** Instead of making multiple orders, customers have begun to plan their purchases more to save money on shipping and returns costs. Also, customers may opt for bigger/jumbo sized products that are more expensive because they often have long-term monetary value.
- **Customers buy what they love:** Often retailers put their least popular products on sale, and instead of buying multiple discounted items that they *like* throughout November, customers are buying more expensive items, in the right colour and style, that they *love* – again, they are thinking long-term.

Weekly Average Basket Value, Total Market, 2022-23



Weekly Average Conversion Rate (Total Sessions), 2021-23



# Christmas and Boxing Day Sales

IMRG's Online Retail Index shows that the first two weeks of December saw declines (Wk. 1: -9.5% YoY, Wk. 2: -6.5% YoY). But, in the third week, the index revealed positive performance, with an average revenue increase of +10.3% YoY. This was the top performing week in all of 2023 and hints to last minute panic buying after a period of heightened buyers' hesitancy.

Beers, wines & spirits (78.8% YoY), as well as health & beauty (+56% YoY) and clothing (+10.7% YoY) retailers performed well in the third week of December, suggesting festive preparation. Electrical retailers also saw some growth that week (+5.4% YoY). Also, the reports of high street footfall being down owing to bad weather could explain the boost in online sales for these retailers. Furthermore, a special mention goes to clothing retailers who, after 12 months of negative YoY growth, achieved a positive result of +1% YoY in December.

Interestingly, there seemed to be less customer demand in w/c 24th December (-12.8% YoY). With this decline we can assume that there was less participation in Boxing Day sales in 2023. The result for December was -4.3% YoY, which is much lower than IMRG's expectation (+1% YoY), and reveals three years of decline.

## December Performance 2019-23:

**2019: +10.9%** (Year-on-Year)

**2020: +33.1%** (Year-on-Year)

**2021: -10.6%** (Year-on-Year)

**2022: -9.3%** (Year-on-Year)

**2023: -4.3%** (Year-on-Year)

# Conclusion

**In what was a challenging year for online retail, November (-1.6% YoY) showed some resilience, and December's decline (-4.3% YoY) was less than in previous years. IMRG predicts a balanced outlook for 2024, forecasting +1% YoY for November and 0% YoY for December.**

In 2024, retailers may adapt their strategies, employing clever discounting techniques with a loyalty-driven focus. For example, tactful pricing for valued customers, and special discounts for particular customer segments.

Yet again, 'up to' discounts proved the most popular discount type, highlighting that retailers have tuned into customer psychology and the lure of big deals. Yet, most retailers choose to limit this to 'selected products' only, using their data to make smart and sustainable choices on where to place their discounts.

In 2023, numerous retailers incorporated strategic customer engagement methods such as gamification and personalisation, while also minimising purchase friction by transparently presenting discount rules and Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) services. As the industry navigates a period of decline, the anticipation is for a greater adoption of acquisition and retention techniques in 2024.

Interestingly, weather patterns had a significant impact on Black Friday, with the latter half of the week performing better as temperatures dropped to freezing. At this time of year, multichannel retailers can prioritise online sales, given potential decreased enthusiasm for high street shopping. Thus, creating what feels like an in-store experience becomes ever more essential.







The UK  
Ecommerce  
Association

# Contact

## IMRG

Tel: 0203 696 0980  
Email: [membership@imrg.org](mailto:membership@imrg.org)

[www.imrg.org](http://www.imrg.org)

## Sheer ID

Email: [hello@sheerid.com](mailto:hello@sheerid.com)

[Sheerid.com/business](http://Sheerid.com/business)

