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BRIGHTPEARL GUIDES

How to Make Sure This Year's Peak Season is Your Best Ever

Including:

- 8 Signs You Didn't Have The Right Tech Last Peak Season
- Your Five-Point Plan For Peak Season Success

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**GROW
FEARLESSLY**

Peak Season Should Be a Top Priority

For most merchants, Black Friday, Cyber Monday and the run up to Christmas are critical for the overall performance of the business — and it's easy to see why.

It's clear that Peak Season is a huge opportunity, but it's also the biggest test of a business's backend systems. When demand is through the roof and orders are coming in thick and fast, it highlights how well (or not so well) workflows and processes are running.

So, with Holiday Season 2021 fresh in our minds, now is the perfect time to take action that will help your business iron out issues and get ready to smash your goals during the next peak period, whether it's the festive season or a seasonal promotion.

This guide contains everything you need to make that happen - including a rundown of the surefire signs you don't currently have the right tech in place and a five-point plan of action to get you ready to smash your goals.

In 2021, customers spent a whopping \$6.3 billion across Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

30% of the entire year's sales took place in the short window between Black Friday and Christmas, with Black Friday sales up by 21% compared to 2020 in North America alone.

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8 Signs You Didn't Have The Right Tech Last Peak Season...

1. You and/or your team worked extra hours to process orders and felt stressed or exhausted
2. Your inventory wasn't updated correctly across all your channels, so you ended up overselling or missing out on sales
3. Your shipments were delayed
4. Incorrect orders were sent to customers
5. Your support team is handling lots of complaints and negative reviews*
6. You ran out of stock of your bestsellers after failing to accurately predict demand
7. You spent hours even after Holiday Season consolidating financial data
8. You spent a fortune on marketing to bring in new customers, but you don't know the ROAS (Return On Advertising Spend)

If any of the above sounds familiar, chances are you don't currently have the right tech in place to reach your full potential during Peak Season. But don't worry — we've created a five point plan to help you iron out the issues and get you all set for your best year yet.



* **Bad reviews are bad for business.**

Negative reviews are shown to directly impact success. The difference in revenue between a 3-star and a 5-star rated business can be as high as 33%. Negative reviews are also expensive - our research revealed retailers spend \$10,000 on average each year dealing with negative reviews.

Your **Five-Point Plan** For Peak Season Success

This plan is designed to help you self-assess how prepared you are for Peak Season 2022 - and to give you the tips and tools you need to take action.

1. Embracing Automation

Are your workflows and processes fully automated? Manual post-purchase operations are time-consuming and prone to errors. Fortunately, most laborious, repeatable operations from your order to cash process can be easily automated.

How many of the following key workflows are automated in your business?

- Real-time inventory sync across all channels
- Order status updates
- Routing orders to the best warehouse/inventory location depending on stock level and destination
- Partial fulfillment if part of the order items are unavailable
- Create and send POs to dropshippers
- Pick the right shipping method for each order
- Create shipping notes and labels
- Transfer inventory between warehouses
- Updating your customers on order status
- Invoicing
- Segmenting your customers based on the metrics that matter most to your business such as number of orders, margins, order value and LTV.

Ticked five or fewer?
It's time to take action.

Next Steps...

If most of your workflows are not automated yet and your business is expanding fast, you should consider adopting a solution that can automate those workflows based on your needs (freeing you up to focus on growth).

Check out this short video to see how [Brightpearl Automation Engine](#) smartly automates the most laborious tasks.

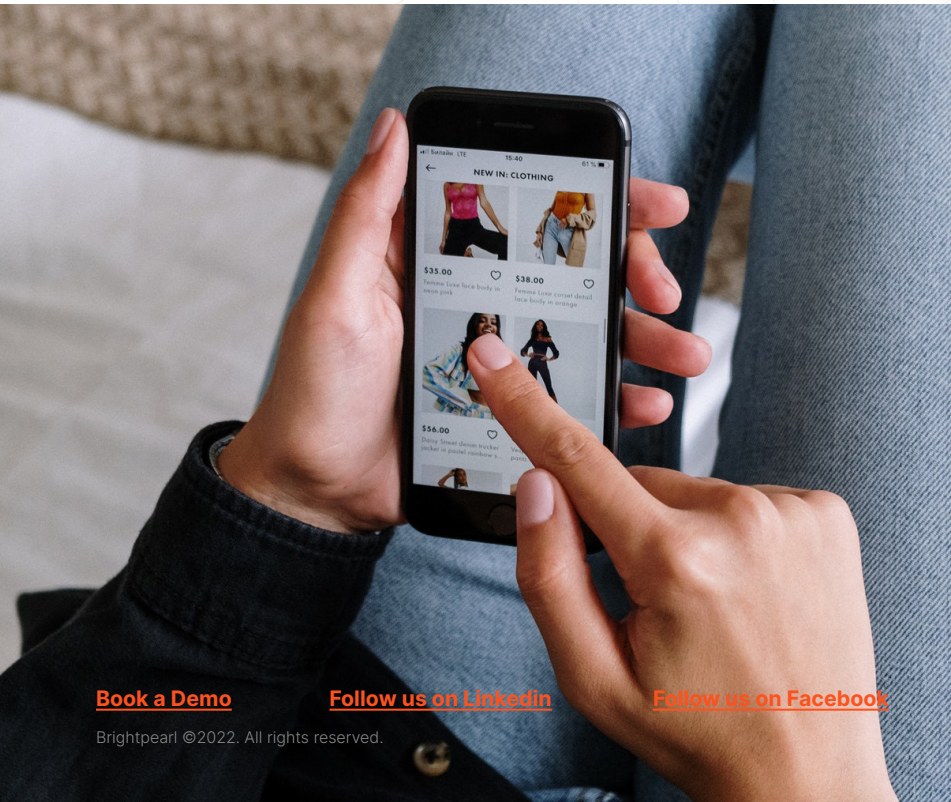


2. Creating a Seamless Shopping Experience

Modern consumers are more demanding than ever. They expect a slick, seamless online shopping experience — and, if they don't get it, they're more than willing to shop elsewhere.

This means being able to provide a smooth shopping experience, even when orders spike during busy periods, is critical for your overall success.

How many of these key factors for a smooth online shopping experience apply to your business?



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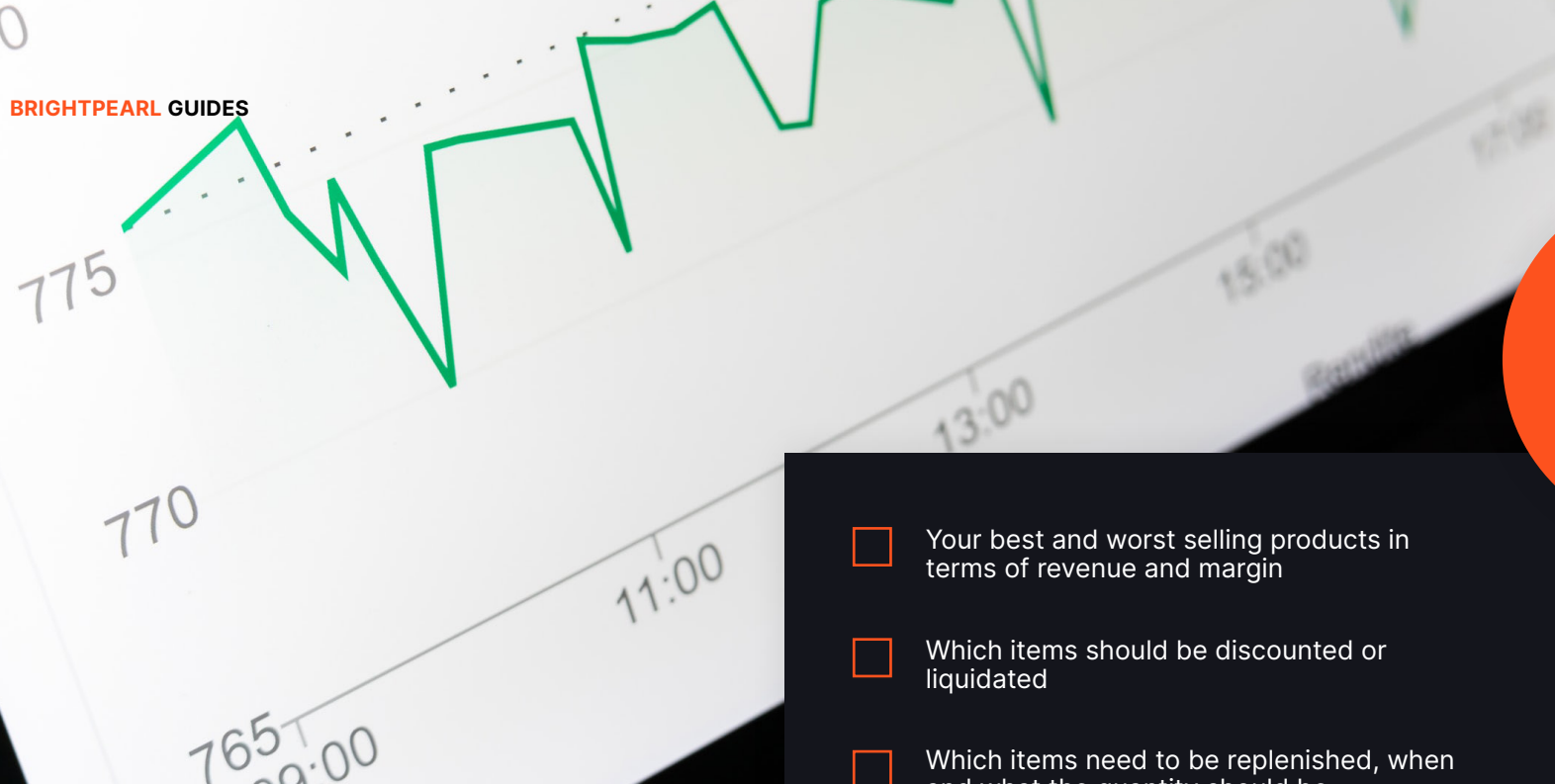
Ticked **five** or fewer?
Here's what to **do next...**

- Optimal page load time (even when web traffic multiplies)
- Functional and smooth navigation on small screens and mobile devices
- High-resolution product images that show critical product details
- Clear product descriptions
- Easy check-out process with different payment options
- Different shipping options with fees clearly notified
- Personalized merchandising based on visitors' browsing or buying history
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to increase visibility on search engines and attract more potential customers
- Dedicated landing pages for PPC or paid social adverts
- Appropriate hosting to suit your business - either on a shared server or dedicated server

Next Steps...

1. It takes new web store visitors just **10 seconds** to decide whether to stay and shop or move on. If you haven't checked your web store's page load time, this should be the first thing on your to-do list.
2. Once it's optimized, you should consider working on the other elements listed above to improve the shopping experience.
3. As a result of your efforts, you may notice traffic to your store increasing. Ensure your hosting service can handle the boost in visitors.
4. Don't have the bandwidth to complete these tasks? Consider hiring a specialist e-commerce agency to optimize your web store on your behalf.

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If there are any you haven't ticked, it's worth making some changes.

3. Gaining Essential Insight

Do you have the necessary insights into your business performance to quickly make data-driven decisions?

It's essential to have a complete picture of how well things are going — and to be able to instantly access the information you need to maximize sales (during Peak Season, you won't have time to go hunting for it).

Ask yourself whether you have insights on the following...

- Your best and worst selling products in terms of revenue and margin
- Which items should be discounted or liquidated
- Which items need to be replenished, when and what the quantity should be
- Financial data - including profit and loss, revenue by product/sales channel and year over year comparison
- Best performing marketing campaigns in terms of ROAS or number of new customers
- Best suppliers in terms of payment terms and costs
- Best customers based on different metrics such as number of orders, average order value, margins and LTV

Next Steps...

- If you don't have advanced reporting in place yet, it should be top of your 'to-do' list. A good reporting system should be able to provide you with the data listed above so you'll be able to better forecast demand and have an accurate 360-degree view of your business.
- If you're still using spreadsheets, consider using an [inventory demand planning](#) tool that provides in-depth reports on your business performance as well as replenishment recommendations. Make sure that the tool you use takes into account any seasonality or promotions, which is very important for accurate inventory planning in Peak Season.
- Even if you already use a back office system, make sure all the data listed above is covered and can be customized to your needs. Also, make sure accounting is integrated.

4. Adding New Sales Channels

Are you able to quickly and easily add new sales channels? In the new [Hyper-Scalable Era](#), online shoppers' behavior is ever-changing. A [recent study](#) revealed that 49% of shoppers have increasingly used new, non-traditional channels to make purchases online in the last 12 months.

Businesses must be able to adapt to consumer demand, including adding emerging channels — especially during Peak Season.

There are two key things needed to make this happen...

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Haven't ticked either? **Here's what you need to do...**

- A reliable front-end platform that enables you to sell on emerging channels quickly
- A flexible back-end operating system that lets you quickly curate a changing roster of apps, platforms and tools

Next Steps...

- For the front end of your business, it's best to use a trusted e-commerce provider such as Shopify or BigCommerce. This will give you speedy access via pre-built connections to channels like TikTok and Instagram — this is better than a bespoke store which would require using untested connections built by a developer.
- For the backend, you need an operating system which can cope with the increased complexity you'll experience with extra sales channels. Not only will the system need to be able to handle the logistics, it will need to be flexible enough to easily connect to new channels without slowing down or causing issues. This is where ERPs fall short as they can't connect to new channels without lengthy and costly customizations.

5. Nailing Customer Service

Does your customer service take a dive when orders spike? Modern consumers want and expect consistently high service — even if it's Peak Season.

Are you able to offer these crucial services for customers?

- Fast delivery (same-day or named-day delivery)
- Order and shipping status updates
- Hassle-free returns
- Customer support

If you haven't ticked every box, follow the next steps.

Next Steps...

- Unless you increase your headcount exponentially over the Peak Season you simply won't be able to deliver your usual service without using automation. Automation can cut shipping time by 92%, lower labor costs by 50% and reduce human error by 65%. You can even automate returns and sending order/shipping status updates.
- Find out more about the benefits of automation [here](#).



The key takeaways

The steps in this guide will have given you plenty of tasks to add to your to-do list. If it feels overwhelming, focus on these three questions...

1. What are your most important and least efficient processes based on your goals?
2. What issues caused you to receive negative customer reviews in your last Holiday Season?
3. What systems and tools do you need to fix these issues and processes?

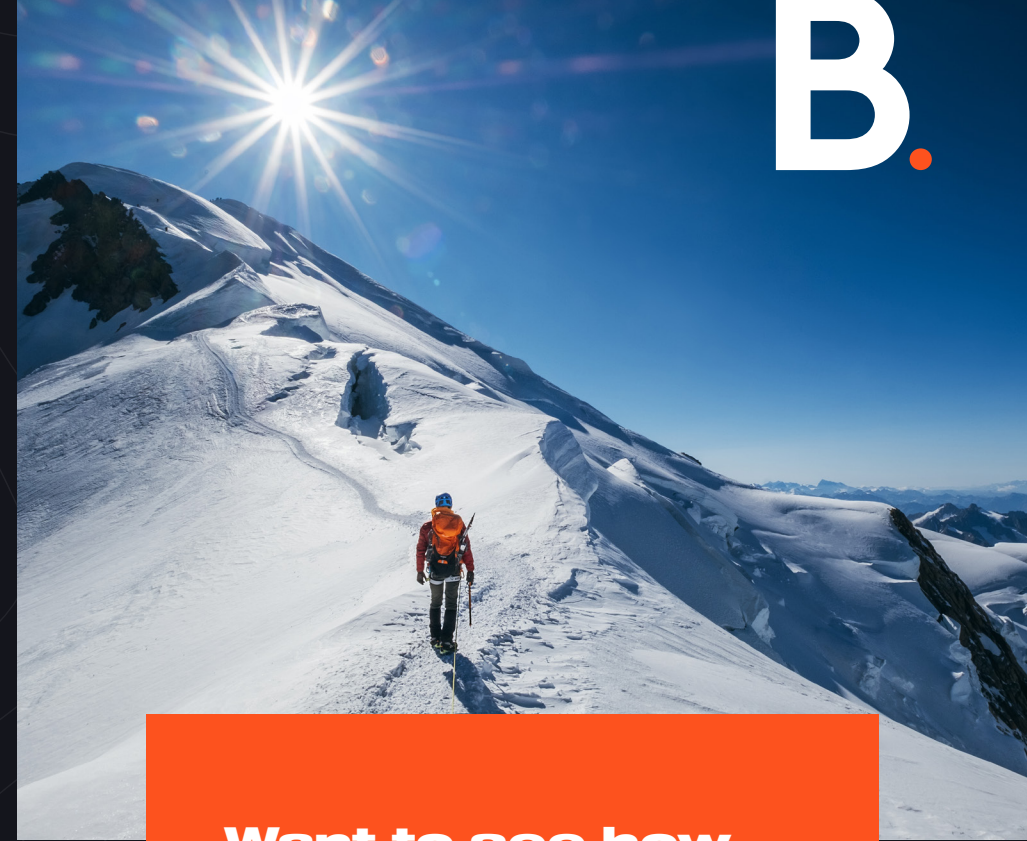
Based on your answers, you can build a roadmap for success now before the next Peak Season is upon us.

About Brightpearl

[Brightpearl](#) is the flexible, future-proof Retail Operating System for modern multichannel and e-commerce merchants.

Brightpearl is packed with dedicated, hyper-scalable functionality to ensure you make the most of Peak Season, including a powerful [Automation Engine](#), [advanced reporting](#), a market-leading [Demand Planner](#) and a huge library of [Plug & Play integrations](#).

More than 3,000 businesses in 26 countries use Brightpearl and the platform powers more than \$5bn of business a year.



Want to see how Brightpearl can help your business Grow Fearlessly?

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