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— September 2020 —

BFCM 2020

Guest Expert Panel

					
Jeremy Friedland	Svetlana Zhitnitsky	Aleks Nikoloski	Victoria Griggs	Deven Davis	Ane Susanto

**Here's What Six Successful
Ecom Insiders Are Doing
Differently for BFCM in 2020 to
Get Maximum Results!**

Hey Insiders!

Don't ignore this one ...

It's our red-hot EI Guest Expert Panel with six successful EI rockstars.

Read through the interview below and soak up all the revenue-making glory that these pages are drenched in. DO NOT SKIP OVER any of this content. It's far too good to miss. If you do ignore it, you must simply hate money.

If you want to watch the video recording of these interviews, be sure to log in to your EI membership (<https://members.ecoinsider.com/login/>) and search for "BFCM 2020."

But wait!

There's a special BONUS SECTION from Ane Susanto, "Expert #6" (below) who wasn't on the call. I added Ane's amazing insights at the end of this report. Be sure to catch that too!

If you are going to read through this, then grab your highlighter and favorite beverage and dive in!

Expert #1

Jeremy Friedland

- List building
- Giveaway funnel
- Minichat
- Free giveaway funnel

Bret: G'day, guys, Bret here. Welcome to the 2020 GSD Guest Expert Mastermind. I feel excited and happy to be here with these legends from the BGS family. We've got Jeremy, Svetlana, Aleks, Deven, and Victoria.

The way this is going to roll out is very simple. We're just going to do 10-minute sessions like a *Ted Talk*. Everyone's going to share their pearls of wisdom in the 10 minutes, and there might be some opportunities for all of us to jump in and do some clarifying questions. Then at the end, we can just go with the flow and talk about whatever comes up and flesh out any more ideas that come from that. Also, any gems that come from this will be transferred into a 2.0 version of the GSD, so that'll be exciting.

Keep in mind too: maybe you guys might be able to talk about how in the US a lot of the major shopping centers aren't open for Black Friday.

Jeremy: Yeah.

Victoria: That's right.

Bret: So that's a big thing. That's not the case for us in Australia. So if there's any opportunity to talk about the relevance of 2020, then that'd be cool as well.

Without any further ado, let's dive straight in and hear from Jeremy. Mate, you've got the mic. Take it away, brother.

Jeremy: All right. Well, thanks everybody for coming on board and listening to this or reading this—whatever format you are consuming this information in.

I'm going to go back to my old one-trick pony, which is giveaways. I've been running giveaways since 2016, 2017, to really build, grow, and scale my business for lack of better terms. So that's been a big strategy of mine, and you'll see, if you pay attention, giveaways everywhere.

Casinos do giveaways. Gas stations do giveaways. All the big companies do giveaways, and they do them because they work. They work really well actually. It depends on the structure that you decide to do the giveaways in. Most people I find are doing giveaways wrong. They're basically just spending a bunch of money to get people on a list, and then they have one big hoopla where they say "Here's the winner" and then everyone else can get a discount, or something like that, at our store. And just one big blast, and they never do anything with that list again. And they spend a bunch of money to get the list.

Well, the problem with that is that, if you're not continually promoting to that list and sending new offers to that list, you've just wasted a bunch of money and a bunch of effort on just one big blast. So my strategy that I use for my giveaways is, I actually build three lists—an email list, an SMS list, and a Facebook Messenger bot list. We use that using Minichat. And then with that, I'm able to send promotions constantly via Minichat, SMS, and email, depending on whatever modality people are most likely to use.

Obviously, depending on the age group and demographics, people are going to respond to different modalities. So some people are more apt to respond to an email whereas some people are going to be more apt to respond to Facebook Messenger. I will say that my highest open rate is always Facebook Messenger. I usually get around a 90% open rate with my Facebook messages, which is why building that list is so crucial to getting sales.

The other benefit to building a Facebook Messenger list is that sending ads and promotions to people that are on your Facebook Messenger list is like a 2,000% ROI. It's ridiculous. Because they're already on your list. So sending them a message about an offer that you're going to make to a list that you already own doesn't cost very much money. It's pennies as opposed to dollars. I think the average cost per click to get someone to my website was around a dollar, \$1.10, \$1.20, something like that. And to get someone to my website via a Facebook Messenger ad is right around four

or five cents. So it was very, very inexpensive once you acquired the lead. The key obviously is to getting the leads.

Jeremy: So with my giveaway strategy, what I do is, I usually pick an offer and it depends on what your price point is, but you don't want it to be something that's outside of your normal price range on your store. So for me, my average order value was right around \$35 to \$40. So I chose an item that's right around \$50 to \$60 for my giveaway. That's associated with my store, obviously my niche. And I create a Facebook post that just says, "Hey, we're doing this giveaway." A lot of times my posts will have an option of colors.

So for instance, I would give away an oil-diffuser from my store. So I had an essential oil store and I would give away a diffuser and the diffuser would have four different color options. And my Facebook posts, in order to get engagement on it, I would say, "Hey, what color would you choose if you were to win this in our giveaway?" So I usually do a little bit of a prelaunch first and get an idea of the engagement on it ... See if people would like it, number one, the item that I'm giving away. And then I also do it for another purpose and that is because sometimes people will have different meanings for the colors or different names for the colors.

And so I don't tell them which color it's going to be. I say, which color would you choose. And so something that is maybe a teal green, they would call it aqua or they'd call pink salmon or whatever. So I would find out through engagement, what names people are calling it the most. And that would be my pre-post. And then I would use those colors on the actual giveaway post—so building engagement first to let them know, hey, we're having a giveaway, which one would you choose first? And then using that second post, my main page, and engagement post, and then using those colors on there.

So then the post would say, "Hey folks, if you love essential oils, you're going to love this giveaway. We're giving away one of these amazing little cutie diffusers. Which color would you choose if you were to win, blue, green, salmon, or white?" So then I'd write the names on the actual pictures, have a picture of the four items, and then I would set up a comment trigger inside Minichat.

Jeremy: So you sign up for a Messenger or Minichat account, and you would set up a comment trigger inside of Minichat so that anyone who left a comment on one of those words, they would immediately get a Facebook message that said, "Hey, thanks for entering the giveaway. Glad you're excited to win your blue, teal, salmon, white [or whatever color they said] diffuser. We're really excited for you to win, but you need to enter. So, enter this keyword," or whatever, send them a link to the giveaway page, which then would be a landing page, a pretty simple ClickFunnels page.

I'm actually more than happy to give you guys the link too. So anyone listening to this or anyone reading this, you can have my giveaway funnel. I'm more than happy to give that to you as a gift. Just PM (private message) me on Facebook. Anyway, here's how the giveaway funnel works. You'd go to the giveaway funnel and then you'd leave your name, email, and phone number. So then now I'm collecting ... Now I already have your Minichat list. I have you on my email list and I have your phone number as well. So I can blast you out a message in any way that I want.

A lot of people are like, well crap, asking for the phone number is probably going to kill your conversion rate. But, in fact, my conversion rate across the board is about 97%. So 97% of the people that came to my website from the ads or from the Facebook posts would give me their name, email, and phone number, which is huge. So that's where most people make the mistake is they get the entry for the giveaway, and then they just say, "Great, got an entry." It costs me a buck or 30 cents or whatever to get the lead. And now I'm just going to wait until this thing's over and send them an email.

Well, the way that I switch things up is, I actually sell something on the back end. So according to Facebook rules, if you are doing a giveaway, everyone who enters the giveaway has to win some sort of prize. There has to be a runner-up prize. So in that case, after they enter my giveaway, the next page (you'll see if you decide to take my funnel) is a page that says, "Hey, thanks for entering the giveaway. Just for entering, you win a prize worth [20 bucks or 15 bucks or whatever]. All you need to do to claim your prize is pay for shipping. So, do you want to claim this prize?" Excuse

me. It'll show a picture of what the prize is, and they can hit the button that says claim the prize.

Jeremy: On the next page, they're able to actually choose multiples of that prize. So they can choose one for \$5.95. They can choose two for \$11. So I do like a scaling discount, or they can choose up to ten for 40 bucks. So I pray to God, everyone picks the ten because I make the most money on that thing. It's usually an item that's around a couple dollars, like \$2 to \$3 shipped. Like a piece of jewelry or a set of stickers or some pens or something like that, or pins as well, that have a high perceived value but a low cost. And then I've now started to pay for my customer acquisition or my leads.

And then, those people that accepted the offer, they go to another page that offers them either the main discount item or the main giveaway item for a 50% discount. Or I actually tested a subscription offer like a micro continuity around the \$10 to \$15 range. And that actually had a 40% take rate. So 40% of the people that came through and took the prize would take the continuity offer as well. So that was a great way to actually start building some subscription businesses or business as well on a micro-continuity level. But you get a thousand people coming through at 10 bucks a pop, [and] it turns into a pretty decent little chunk of change every month.

And then once I build that, it's building up all the leads. I think I've already acquired around 31,000 leads from that process all at a profit. So the leads didn't cost me anything. So I've now built a huge list of people which can easily be done before Black Friday/Cyber Monday if you're scaling that properly. So imagine having a list, a paid-for list that you actually made a profit on. Building that list at a profit and now being able to send them multiple messages before Black Friday/Cyber Monday—30,000 people or more, depending on how you scale, or less, depending on how you scale as well but having a list of thousands of people that you can now send an email to and make an offer to.

Or in my case, I had a really great run doing a Facebook Live video on Black Friday/Cyber Monday. So I actually did a live giveaway where I was on there I think, I don't know, six hours. I was doing a giveaway for six hours and just giving stuff away the whole day. People were buying stuff

the entire time during this whole entire giveaway. And you can do one on Black Friday and you can do one on Cyber Monday as well, and just do these live giveaways and it creates a ton of engagement. It builds up your Facebook page or your Instagram as well. So tons of social growth as well on your page and tons of goodwill and people just are sharing the live giveaway as they're on the page. So they're sharing the live giveaway with their friends. Their friends are coming on the live giveaway and buying stuff and winning stuff. And so it's just a great, great experience.

Bret: **Well done. You did that in bang on 10 minutes, brother. I appreciate that. There's a couple of questions here, but also I do want to tell everyone if they want to know more about this, whether they can kind of go deeper with the AMA (Ask Me Anything) session that you did, right?**

Jeremy: Yeah. They can go ... I did an AMA on it, so they can probably just search Giveaway or look through the AMA recordings. It was one of the earlier ones I think.

Bret: Yep.

Jeremy: If you go on the "Brain" in the EI membership site and type in "giveaway," I'm pretty sure that there's some content on the Brain there as well that goes a little bit deeper also. And then you can also just reach out to me if you want. So if you have more questions or want to go deeper into it, just reach out, and I'll be happy to have a conversation with you too.

Bret: Nice one. Deven, you got a question, mate?

Deven: **Yeah. So, my question ... I had a couple of questions, Jeremy. First of all, I love the concept. I love the giveaway. I love the enthusiasm. I think that's awesome and I think, especially where we're in a world of doom and gloom. Enthusiasm, I think is going to be important and just people want to see something happy right now. So I love your energy. I love the idea here. My wheels are turning.**

My questions revolve around list building, which obviously is the objective here. My first question is, are Messenger and the rules surrounding Messenger ... My understanding is [there's] a 24-hour messaging restriction from Facebook and that window, does that

impact your approach or what we're able to do with a Messenger-based giveaway?

And then I'm also wondering, and maybe you don't have to answer right now if it's not possible, but maybe we can revisit it at another time: Would it be possible to do list building with SMS with this approach? Are there other ways that we can build our list if we're focused more on SMS and email than Messenger at the moment?

Jeremy: Yeah, totally. So I'll answer the first question. And that was around the Messenger bot 24-hour restriction. So they do have a 24-hour restriction. They've actually, technically, always had one, but they tightened it up quite a bit. But no, I haven't found that it actually affects it because it's a way that you ask the question. So there are some workarounds there. My workaround for the 24-hour rule is. instead of messaging your list and saying ... because now you have a selection, you have to say, is this an event update or is this a customer update for shipping or order update or something like that?

And so I use a customer update or a page update, and I'll just ask a question, "Hey, we have some really cool stuff coming down the pike for our business. Would you be interested in hearing more about it?"

Deven: So you're not soliciting out of the gates. You're interacting in that conversational tone. That makes sense.

Jeremy: Yeah. So you use it as a conversation and say, "Hey, we have some really cool updates coming up." You can be really vague. You don't have to say, "We're having a huge sale." Just say, "Hey, we have some really cool things coming down the pike for Roma and was wondering if you want to hear more about it."—"Yes"—"Great. Really excited that you're excited to hear about it. Here's what's going on. If you're interested, go to our store. Here's a 20% discount attached to the deal."

So get them to say yeah, I want to hear more about it first. So it's more of a conversation, and you can even make it, if you want to be extra safe, you can make it an extra step. So, "Hey, great. Glad to hear that you want to know more about it. Here's what we're doing. Would you like to claim

the offer that we're having?"—"Yes." So make them say yes twice, and then you can give them the offer.

Jeremy: So that's how I get around that, but also just using a Facebook sponsored ad is super cheap. That's why they've implemented that is because they want you to actually use their sponsored-ad platform. So that's the other way to get around that. Did that answer your question, Deven?

Deven: It did.

Jeremy: And then on the second one, building the SMS list. Totally. So you can do that because when they opt in, you actually get their phone number as well. And you can put a checkbox in there on the opt-in that says, hey, I consent to receiving SMS messages. It's built into ClickFunnels as an opt-in. So you can do that and just collect that data and you can use—There's a bunch of texts-based apps that you can integrate into ClickFunnels, or if you're using Klaviyo, you can integrate your Klaviyo and send an SMS through Klaviyo as well.

Deven: Cool. Thanks. Appreciate it.

Bret: Awesome. Any other questions guys? All good. That was fire brother. So I'll add these references into the GSD so people can go and dig deeper, and also we'll put your phone number, address, and all personal details in the GSD, so they can come knocking on your door.

Jeremy: Haha. Awesome.

Bret: Mate, I know you got to bounce. I know you'd love to stay. You've already said that. So thanks for your time, brother.

Jeremy: Bye guys.

Deven: Bye Jeremy.

Bret: All right, now we get to listen to the awesome Svetlana, one of the legends in Ecom Insider. I won't steal your thunder. You tell us what you want to share with everyone here. We really appreciate your time.

Expert #2

Svetlana Zhitnitsky

- **Early preparation**
- **Single-product store**
- **Bundling strategy**
- **Email frequency**

Svetlana: Hey guys. Thanks, Bret. That was lovely. I don't know about a rock star, but I'll certainly give this a shot. So I'm Svetlana, for those of you that are either watching or reading this later and don't know me. I have been with Ecom Insider since early 2017, and that was my first foray into ecom. I was attempting to sell online, but I've caught a lot of grief from everybody here for having a Squarespace store before Shopify and all of that. So I definitely learned everything about ecom through BGS. And so it's been a tremendous ride over these last three, almost four years.

So I have a kitchen accessory store. I invented a product and brought it to market with a business partner over the last six-plus years. And the last four of them have been focused specifically on just direct-to-consumer and ecom and Facebook ads and everything related to just online sales. So I started during BFCM of 2017, and we pretty much grew exponentially 100%, 200%, like every year, based on just implementing all of the best practices of BGS and running advertising and all that stuff.

So the one big thing that I would start off with as far as Black Friday/Cyber Monday goes is to start planning early. I know that's not really a shocker for anybody, but in order to really do any well-executed campaign, it really does require a lot of planning. And any time that we've left things for the last minute, we shoot from the hip and lose a lot of our biggest holiday selling time.

So last year, we really did pretty well with that. And just comparing my numbers from 2018 to 2019, we had a 50% increase in revenue, just over those four days, by implementing the BGS email campaigns. So we didn't really do much in email the year before in 2018 and just focused on ads.

And then in 2019, we really implemented the email campaign and saw a 50% increase in revenue from 2018 to 2019, just over that weekend. And 30% of the revenue came from the email specifically. So, big surprise for everybody. It actually does work.

Svetlana: I think the big thing that we found for us as well is that when you really know your customer and you develop a brand voice that works well for your customer, that really helps to generate those sales and make the emails more effective because you can always take the templates and you can just plug and play them into your email sequence, and they will work. But if you tailor it to the way that your customer understands and what they respond to, it's that much more effective. So our approach to email is very personal. We talk to our customers like they're friends, like they're family. We give them behind-the-scenes looks at the business and what's happening with the product, how we're working, and all of those things. And they tend to respond really well.

So that's where the advanced planning comes into play is—we don't send a ton of emails for the most part. We also don't focus all of our emails on just a “buy, buy, buy” kind of message. Because we're in the cooking niche, so we share holiday recipes, we send them a quick video or a message that says hello from the founder, here's behind the scenes of what we're doing at the warehouse, shipping packages, those kinds of things, gifting ideas. And so we actually do get quite a few sales from those emails specifically, but we don't focus all of our language on “Buy this. Here's a deal. Here's a deal.” That kind of thing.

Also, it helps us very much because as I mentioned, we have still one product, which we sell in a couple of different colors. So it's very difficult to continue to go at it from a sales “buy this, buy this” perspective, when you're not constantly offering them new products. So that's our first approach. And then, leading into the Black Friday/Cyber Monday weekend, what we did last year, which worked really well and I think that would work really well for a lot of different businesses that have maybe a smaller product line, is “bundling.” So we picked bundling as our main promotion that we were going to do on the Black Friday/Cyber Monday weekend, and then we gave them tiered discounts from a bundle of two, a bundle of three, a bundle of four.

Svetlana: The first time we introduced bundles on our page, our sales pretty much doubled overnight because even though somebody can go in and go on a product page and say, oh, I want two of those. They don't necessarily think to do that for some reason. But when you say, oh, you buy two—And then even if you give them a smaller discount, even like 5%, 10%, they will buy two, 9 times out of 10. So you can definitely increase your average order value that way. And so for Black Friday/Cyber Monday, we structured our promotion and say, okay, no discounts at all on singles and then tiered discounts on doubles, threes, and then fours. So when I ran my numbers and I analyzed how well that promotion did, about 20–32% of our Black Friday/Cyber Monday sales came from bundles.

And so, that was a big change from the year before, because last year, the year before that, we didn't have bundles at all. And so then when we break down how we actually run our promotions, we will focus each day on a specific topic. So for example, Thursday, we'll do just, "Happy Thanksgiving. Here's our family, here's the things we're grateful for, we're grateful to our customers. Here's maybe a family photo or holiday dinner table," something like that. And then that email makes us about 30% of daily revenue without even any sales, nothing, no plugs at all. So then for Friday is of course Black Friday, so there are a lot of sales, just a more heavy-duty sales day. So we unveil our promotion on that day.

Saturday, we do—because it's a small business Saturday, that day is considered small-business Saturday—So we'll say, "Shop small," and we'll give them a little bit of a background on our company and our founder story and things like that. Sunday is football. So game-day, we'll share some recipes and give them some product pictures of the product used in that specific environment, because a lot of times, people can't envision something unless you actually show it to them in a specific environment. So, we work at it that way. We tend to send at least three to five emails per day on those days, and then multiple re-sends to nonopens.

One thing I did notice that was gold from the last Black Friday/Cyber Monday, from the GSD report specifically, is segmenting your customers between active and inactive lists. Our emails for the active segments and its buyers and prospects, the open rate is about 20–25%. So it definitely makes a big difference. And, also, catchy subject lines (headlines) work

super well. So, we used that “Do you hate me?” email headline from the last GSD, and I noticed that this is one of the ones that actually produced a bunch of engagement because usually you send an email and it doesn't really get engagement, it's a one-way kind of communication. This email we actually got back, and I don't know how many of you remember what the gist of that email was. It's basically saying, "Oh, people, we've had some emails that people don't really like how we're drowning them in emails. And because we feel strongly about our product, we have an obligation to share our story and our product with our customers. So we'll just kind of persevere and push through that."

Svetlana: So we actually had a bunch of engagement, a bunch of responses back in, they were really supportive like, "Hey, keep doing what you're doing, we love your product," and all that. So it's nice too, because you get some feedback from customers about what they think. And 50% of our email revenue for that day came from that one email. And looking at my stats, about 30–35% of our revenue came from those emails. So, catchy headlines definitely really work and if it's something controversial, I think it tends to get a much higher open rate as well. So, that's a definite keeper in the GSDs and those that have not tried it—maybe you think you're a little bit apprehensive about doing something a little bit more controversial with your customers—I would suggest giving it a shot. I think it produces a lot of engagement.

And then moving away from emails, one thing I wanted to touch on, which has really been my bread and butter over the last three years are “pre-order” emails. You see, for some reason we haven't really been able to predict the demand for the product. We typically go in spikes and sell out. So we've actually sold out four times over the last three years. And because we haven't been able to predict the reorder rate, or the production timeline, as well as we would like, sometimes we're out of stock for two months to four months. So during that time, I basically roll right into pre-orders, which is a really, really powerful tool because it's a way to keep selling when you're out of stock and you can actually get the revenues in advance while you're waiting for the product.

So as long as the communication is really clear in terms of where you are with production and then people are placing a pre-order, a lot of people

are very willing to wait. So, why that's important for Black Friday/Cyber Monday is I would really encourage people if you have a new product that you're trying to test out, or maybe you want to try pre-selling a product before you introduce it to your range, before you actually bring it in. It's a great way to, obviously, increase your revenue, and testing ideas, because if people are willing to give you their money before they can get the product or willing to wait, that's definitely a product that's going to be worth selling. And then it's a good way of being able to predict your supply as well. You could still continue to sell the product as long as you do it in a very structured way. And you're very clear in your communications.

Svetlana: So, what you could do with that leading into Black Friday/Cyber Monday is if you're pre-selling and you give people a good offer on the pre-sale that they're willing to wait [for], you know the kinds of products that they like. And then, what you could do for Black Friday/Cyber Monday is you basically, you know what kinds of products they're going to like and so then if you have congruent products that you can offer them on Black Friday weekend, you can give them a special deal on those products based on the preferences that they had. So, it's more personalized, better buying suggestions, and things like that. So it really helps you to learn more about your customer and offer them things that they would be more likely to buy.

And what you could do while you're pre-selling is dangle a carrot in advance, and tell them, "Hey, if you're willing to wait for this pre-order, we'll have just for you, we'll have special deals down the road," and kind of dangle a carrot and encourage them to jump on board early and buy that way. So, we get a lot of engagement for emails like that, 14–25% open rate in emails, 20–50% store revenues come from pre-order emails, one we're pre-ordering. And what we do is we share, again, a lot of behind the scenes, like "Here's where the product is at this moment. Here's us at the warehouse, fulfilling packages. Here's when the order arrives," we show them pictures from the warehouse and things like that so it breeds a lot of engagement and a lot of excitement and kind of keeps people loyal to the brand as well.

So those are some of my big lessons learned from running holiday promotions from being in business and trying to get through the growing

pains of the business and all that stuff. And yeah. So that's ... what I've got for you guys.

Bret: **Awesome. That was awesome. Thanks Svetlana. That was really cool. I loved how you mentioned the importance of tailoring emails. That's the hardest thing I do when I write the GSD emails, trying to make it generic for 600 different businesses. It's not easy, so I'm glad to hear you do that. It's really worth it to put in that extra effort.**

I had a couple of questions. So you said that you put discounts on the bundles but left the single products with no discount. So, and then the sales of the bundles was 20%, I think, 23%, 26% or something. So, that means even through Black Friday, you got 75%, roundabout, of the full price product. That's pretty cool.

Svetlana: Yeah. So people if they really want to buy one, they'll buy it at full price. So, you actually, yeah, it increases your average order value regardless, because otherwise you feel like on Black Friday, you tend to want to give discounts on everything. And sometimes it's just, it's [such] a good showcase that sometimes you don't need to discount as long as there's a relative value to the items. And then everyone makes a decision on the basis of what they find important. So either way it's a win-win.

Bret: **Yeah. Nice one. Another question I had was with the content emails, which is really smart, I like that. So there's no call to action on that email at all? You just point them to a page with your video or your blog. And do they just, if the people that buy from those emails, are they clicking on "shop" and then going on from there?**

Svetlana: So, some of them. It depends on the content of the email. If it's just an email, just sharing a recipe, or us saying "Happy Thanksgiving ... we're really grateful for you," those kinds of emails, we don't put a call to action. But what we do is, we'll include images or video in the body of the email and those tend to be linked to either a collection page or product page. And so when people click on things, they'll still wind up going to the site. So yeah, that tends to work pretty well because I noticed from emails like that, that people are really motivated to buy. So they will, they'll find you basically.

Bret: **Yeah. Nice. And are you doing the hot list campaign this year?**

Svetlana: Yes, I am going to, so my focus over the next month or so is to actually introduce several different products so that I can start augmenting my product offering. And then I can take advantage of more of the promotions that are in the tool. So yes, my aim is to take my own advice and actually start planning even earlier than last year. So I can actually implement a lot of these things. Yep. Yep. So, definitely over the next couple of months, there's going to be some big changes in the business too.

Bret: Excellent. Very cool. Thanks. Thanks so much. That was great. I appreciate that. All right, we're going to move straight over to Aleks. How are you, m' man?

Expert #3

Aleks Nikoloski

- **Getting your store ready!**
- **RO, bug-checking, devices**
- **When never to test!**
- **Your return policy**

Aleks: What's up. How's it going everybody?

Bret: It's good. Thanks for jumping on buddy. So you're going to give us a bit of a rundown of how to do some RO on the store before a big promotion on this mate. So I'll let you take it away, brother.

Aleks: Yeah. So, we're going to talk real quick about getting your store basically ready for the season, for the Black Friday, right? If you have to be dialed in at any other time of the year, this is probably 10 times more important because of all of the surge of traffic, obviously. So, a couple of things that you need to take care of.

First, dialing in your store (meaning making sure you have all of the best practices that we teach you already installed in your store). First, go through your RO handbook one more time, if you haven't already, and make sure you apply everything that you can in a best practice. And ... review the last jam session you've been on, or if you haven't, go on one and apply everything that we tell you there, that's number one.

Number two is bug checking. You have to make sure that your store works flawlessly in every single one of your most popular browser device combinations on your site, okay? The way you find these is by going, obviously, to your Google analytics, your audience report, you go to audience technology, and browser and OS report. That's where you see the browser sign. What you want to do is you want to select at least a one-month or two-month period, and you might need to select more

(depending on the traffic, if your traffic to your site is low), and take a note of the top browsers that make at least 80% of your total traffic. And these will typically be the ones that you know of like Safari, Chrome, Safari (in-app), Android web view. Those two are basically the in-app browsers. For example, if you open an ad through your Instagram app, that's an in-app browser, so you want to test those as well. And then probably [there] will be Samsung Internet, Edge, Firefox, and maybe Internet Explorer, depending on your audience. If your audience is typically an older demographic, then they will be using Internet Explorer.

Aleks: Luckily, they're finally rolling it out by the end of this year, I think, and I'm super pumped up.

So anyway, you find the most browsers, and then you find the most popular devices, also in the audience report. And then you go to mobile and then devices, then—same thing—select at least one to two months' worth of data. And take a note of the top devices that make at least 80% of your total traffic. And obviously this will be either iPhones or Samsungs typically, right? The majority of them. And you go, what do you want to do, if you go through these devices, browser combinations with some browser testing tool. We use BrowserStack at BGS; you can use a multitude and any other tools out there.

But honestly, this will be too many combinations if you're going to do every single most-popular device and browser. So, it's more important really to go through the different browsers more than the different devices, because that's where the issues mostly happen. And, if you do at least the top two to three most popular devices and run through all of these browsers on those devices—the three most popular Samsungs, three most popular iPhones—and you run through all of these browsers from those six technical devices, you'll be good to go. Obviously, the whole goal of this is to go through them and find if there are any bugs, right? Any issues, whatever. So, you find those bugs, you fix them, and then make sure that everything is looking right, okay? That's the number two.

The third thing—it's going along the same lines as you don't want to run tests during this time. And, even though it might be tempting because of the high surge of traffic, otherwise you might think, "Oh, my site doesn't have enough traffic, but on black Friday, I'm having a ton of traffic." You

don't want to do this. I don't recommend it because it can hurt you a lot more than it can help if you miss, if you mess up the code and you miss some browser combination, browser device, combination, where the code is still broken. And it's very easy to miss this. So, you don't want to mess this up, okay? So, this is the time to focus on your customers and customer service. So you can give your customers a world-class experience and you can't waste time on technical issues. So don't run any tests.

Aleks: This is super important, especially in this period, to set up proper expectations, right? When we talk about taking care of your customers, you need to set up proper expectations when it comes to shipping, okay? So if you don't already have a good shipping and returns policy, make sure you rewrite it. By good, I mean, in a customer-centric way [and] that a customer can understand it. Your visitors will be much less confident about buying from you if they don't understand your returns policy, right? This is obvious. We've all done it. If you go to a website [and] you don't know what's going on with the shipping and return, it's very likely you're going to bounce.

So, it's very crucial you communicate your returns policy in a clear and concise manner. Visitors have basically two main questions when it comes to their returns policy: "Can I return this product if I don't like it?" and, "Is it free to return it?" That's it. So, make sure you address those two questions at the beginning of a return policy, okay? Keep in mind that if you offer free returns to your customers, it's not enough just to say, "Free returns" in your policy, because it can often get misinterpreted for "*Freedom* to return product" versus "Free return shipping." So we want to explicitly say that your return shipping is free, okay? So, you can say, "Free return shipping," or if applicable, "Free shipping and free return shipping," instead of just "Free returns." Does that make sense? So, make the policy brief and easy to scan while covering the basic return information for the majority of your visitors.

By "majority," I mean, if you sell mainly to US customers and you have some international customers there too, make sure that it's at least for the US customers, it's very obvious. So, one to three sentences or a short list of the conditions is more than enough, okay? You can hide any additional

information behind a link with a progressive disclosure for people that want to read more. And, if you must have a very complex return policy, like if your product catalog is too big and you have different return policies for every product, excuse me, make sure that the return policy is very well structured with paragraphs no longer than three to four lines, clear headlines and subheadlines, obviously copywriting 101; white spaces and tables so that people can easily scan the information and find what they need, right? Avoid presenting your information in a wall-of-text format, because nobody will read it. And you want people to read it. This is not a time where you don't want them to read this stuff. Okay.

Aleks: And last but not least, consider [that] a number of visitors will read your returns policy ... Write it in a customer-centric way in a conversational tone. The returns policy should not be treated as legal information. So, avoid all the corporate jargon and fancy legal words because they will only increase customer purchase anxiety, okay? Your legal team should not be writing the returns policies. Instead, have the policy written by your customer service or marketing team or any other team that has contact with your customers on a consistent basis and speaks their language. Make the writing warm and use friendly language, just the way you would talk to customers, okay?

And then the last thing is, obviously, once you rewrite this, you've got to update this policy everywhere: in your shipping or returns page, on your shipping and returns tab, on the cart, on the checkout, on the top bars, any promo bars, and banners on the link with a pop-up that we placed near the price. And everywhere else, really, that you mention your shipping policy and returns policy in your site, okay?

[Those are] really the three biggest things: Dial in your store with the best practices and make sure there are no bugs anywhere and fix them once you find them and then set up the proper expectations and obviously don't run the tests. And two more things, prepare, obviously ... Svetlana was talking about promo, and then we have Deven and Victoria later. Prepare your promo materials early. The graphics, the emails scheduling, the list segmentation, the site promo banners, ad creatives and copy, and all of that stuff. And, last but not least, obviously, if you don't have inventory,

you can't sell. So, make sure you have your inventory ready and plan right and plan properly.

Aleks: And if you want more in-depth information about forecasting and stuff, go to *Ecommerce Evolved* and read Tanner's chapters on sales forecasting and inventory forecasting, and you'll be good to go. And remember Chinese New Years, of course ... So, that's it. Very short and to the point.

Bret: That's awesome man. That's so good and so important. I appreciate that, man. I loved how you reminded everyone to soften up the return policy to make that more conversational. Because it's, yeah ...

Aleks: Yeah, it's super crucial.

Bret: Yeah. That's cool.

Aleks: And that's the biggest problem really, because people write it with this corporate jargon that almost sounds scary, like signing a freaking contract for buying a house or something, right? You don't want that. It has to be like talking to your customers.

Bret: Yeah. Deven, you had a question, my man?

Deven: Yeah. Just, you've already kind of addressed it, Aleks, maybe just some clarification. Do you recommend extending, say I have a 30-day return policy. Do you recommend extending that during the holiday season? I know last year we ran into this issue, or the last couple of years, where our return policy didn't extend through what the gift-giving time would be, necessarily. And, I think a lot of people have concerns. We got some feedback in surveys saying, "I would have purchased, but I was afraid that they weren't going to like the gift, and so I didn't and I bought somewhere else."

Aleks: That's actually very, very smart. Just make sure that your numbers work correctly. I mean, obviously you probably don't have that big of a return percentage, but that's a great idea actually. I love that. I would definitely do that.

Bret: Yeah. What I liked about it was, Deven, with Black Friday, you'd extend it past Christmas obviously, but also from a copywriting point of view, if you

just give them a number of days, you shouldn't expect them to calculate that, you have to write copy that says, "Can return after Christmas".

Deven: Yes.

Bret: Yeah. That's cool. Thanks for that Aleks.

Aleks: Yes sir.

Bret: Now we're going to go to Victoria who's got some cool slides to share. So tell me when you're ready, Victoria, and I'll give you sharing permission or I'll do the permission now actually.

Expert #4

Victoria Griggs

- **PowerPoint Slides on USB card**
- **Facebook ad, Q4 best practices**
- **Avoiding account shutdowns**
- **Website best practices**
- **Holiday sales planning**
- **Opportunities in 2020**
- **And so much more!!**

Note: Victoria used a very thorough PowerPoint for this presentation. For the best experience with Victoria's presentation, please access the PDF slides of these PowerPoints from the USB card included with this GSD bundle.

Victoria: Okay. So yeah, whenever anyone says, "Hey, can you give a presentation on something," ... my 17 years of corporate kick-in and I just think—better in PowerPoint. So, sorry for this guys. It just helps me to run through everything I wanted to say. So I've got a lot of stuff here, and I'll just run through it quickly because you have the slides.

What I wanted to do was go over some kind of old standby best practices, some opportunities for 2020, why this year is different, how to take advantage of it, and some resources. So, in the old standby, this is like

bread and butter that really applies to every year. This actually, these first couple sections here on Facebook account and website, I'm coming at it more from a "this year" perspective. So, even though this is true every year, it's even, I would say, more true this year because if you've looked at any advertising forums, account shutdowns have been a huge issue this year. And so, you'd want to be sure that you are safe and have backup systems in place leading into Q4. And so, while this is always true, I think it's especially true right now.

Victoria: So make sure you get your Facebook account infrastructure ready. So, each person can have up to two different business managers, and sometimes they let you have more. If you try to, and I'm not saying anything shady, Facebook allows you to have a couple of different business managers. So, definitely don't do anything shady.

Within each business manager you can have one to five ad accounts. So you do want to just open and have extra ad accounts because if you only have one business manager [and] something happens to your business manager, they will not let you open another one. Same with ad accounts within a business manager. So be sure that you've kind of opened up and created that infrastructure first.

And what they've started to do also is, if you just create an ad account but don't use it, they'll shut it down for inactivity, so you just want to be sure that you run a low-budget campaign in each ad account maybe at least once every 60 days. It can be a one- or two-dollar content campaign for a couple of days, but just to kind of keep that ad account alive. And then I would say, season at least a couple of different accounts. So, usually at a brand new ad account, they cap your spend at \$25 a day and then you work it up to 250 a day, and then they kind of, based on your billing history, let you move up from there. So if you're just getting started, this may not be as relevant. If you are a high-volume business, you don't want to have an account shut down or anything happen and have to go in and start from scratch with your spend capped in the heat of the Q4 season. So just be sure you've got a couple of different things ready.

And I would say, place at least two pixels on your site. So you can have your developer place them or use Trackify so that if something

happens—and not only is your account shut down, but they block your pixel, where you no longer have access to the audiences that you've been building—you've got another one that has the audiences available to you.

Victoria: So, I'm moving into some website best practices now, and this is really again from a Facebook point of view. So Aleks is definitely talking about pure website best practices. I'm looking at it from Facebook and what they're looking at. So first of all, this just goes without saying, test your funnels ahead of time so you know what converts. Just like you don't want to be running website tests, you don't really want to be running some brand new funnel tests to the extent that you can control that leading into Q4. If you've got new products that you can launch ahead of time, even if it's a pre-order situation, something where you're working out the kinks and it's not brand new during Q4.

And also website speed: This is something that's really come up a lot lately. And the people that I work with, in the ads manager, if you just look at your reporting and compare your website link clicks to landing page views, these are people who have clicked on your ad with the intention of going to your website. Your landing-page views is someone who has actually landed on your website and the page has loaded. That should be within about 90% of each other. A lot lately, I've been seeing that's 50–60%. So people are losing traffic without even realizing it. So you're paying for people who never hit your website. Almost always, that's a website speed issue, and you're really looking for a page load to be less than two seconds.

So other ones that I'll just be kind of quick [about]: make sure your site's easy to navigate. They had some really interesting research that Facebook did, and we'll go into a little bit later—new groups buying more on Facebook and buying more on mobile and making sure it's really easy to navigate through, that can be a place [to improve]. There were a lot of people that when they [were] polled expressed frustration at not being able to purchase and having issues with being able to type into fields on mobile and having the drop-down buttons easy to navigate and tap. So, really go through it on mobile and make sure it's easy to use, especially for people who might be an older demographic, who are really online more now than they used to be prior to COVID.

Victoria: Make sure—these are just compliance—your terms, contact us, and privacy policy are on every page. And then these are things, your products, shipping time, return policy, Aleks went over a lot of these. The reason I have them on here is because if your account gets shut down, they actually have a checklist that they go through. If you say, "Hey, my account was shut down. I am a legitimate business. Please review this." They don't just look at your ads and your page. They look at you as a business, and they actually have a checklist that they go through and say, "Are you compliant with these things?" So these are some things that actually Facebook reps will look at, or, I should say, the compliance team will look at prior to saying if they'll re-enable your account. So you want to be sure that these [compliance requirements are met]—you know: nice, professional images; authentic customer reviews, with a filter function for people to be able to search by ratings; being very clear about shipping and returns. And then also, this is something that's come up with a customer data policy: making sure you're compliant now with the California Privacy Act and GDPR, if applicable. So again, these are website best practices with a Facebook perspective.

So, holiday sales planning: This is still back in kind of bread-and-butter [mode]. Plan them well in advance. We've all said that: discounts and creative. One of the things I've seen that is really successful is not just relying on the Black Friday/Cyber Monday weekend, but really planning a series of sales and planning it ahead of time so that they flow and don't compete. And map it out on a calendar so everyone on your team is clear. You really visualize the customer journey and make sure you're not giving competing discount codes. And also [make] sure discount codes are easy to use during the sale and [end] old ones when they're no longer available, because people are using Honey and other apps, so they find your discount codes, even if you don't think they're active anymore. So really, be sure to do that clean up on Shopify and keep your promos fresh. We'll talk a little bit about that in the next slide.

Building your list ahead of time across channels so you can reach out to them: email, messenger, SMS, but also Pixel, video views, things that are within the platform as well, your Instagram and Facebook interaction, engagement rates.

So just every way that you can reach out to them, really leveraging. So you're set up to leverage your targeting during that [time], and consider something where you're giving people an additional reason to sign up—maybe it's a VIP list or you're building a Facebook group—because with a Facebook group, everyone in that group sees all of your messages. So it's a nice way to interact with people, and of course, plan to go deep on retargeting across channels during the Black Friday/Cyber Monday weekend.

Victoria: These are just some examples. Season of sales—like, there are so many things that are coming up over the next few months. There's no shortage of ideas for how to do a sale and how to keep that promo fresh, and really take your customers on a journey and give them multiple reasons to buy, not just the Black Friday/Cyber Monday. So everything from the end of summer, Labor Day, all the way through, and something that's really interesting: 11/11 is apparently Singles' Day. And in Asia, that's an even bigger sales day than Black Friday/Cyber Monday. It was, last year. So there are a ton of different promos that you could do leading right up to it, even starting the week prior.

So you could have, you know, there's Veteran's Day clearance leading into your Cyber Monday. Maybe the clearance is the weekend before. People usually think of clearance as the end, but that really is finishing up, getting rid of summer inventory, leading into fall. Having a category sale on a particular set of items that are selling well, maybe a gift promo day, like, hey, we're giving away the special gifts. Sometimes it's a surprise; sometimes I say what it is. And then these are ones that I listed out, Black Friday/Cyber Monday or Black Friday/Cyber Monday weekend. Those are different. I've had clients that do just a Black Friday sale and then Cyber Monday is treated differently. So they've got another reason to get back out. It's not like, hey, the sale is ending on Monday. It's like, hey, now it's Cyber Monday sale. So it gives you another reason to reach out with something fresh. I don't know that I've seen enough people doing it both ways to see that there's a difference. But I do know that people that I'm working with are doing it differently, either treating it kind of [like] a Friday, Saturday, Sunday sale, and then Monday, or treating it [as] just all four days.

Of course, calling out Small Business Saturday—that's a shop-small cyber week, so you can extend it through Friday of that next week; giving Tuesday, where you're giving a portion of sales to a charity; a VIP sale, free shipping, 12:12, last chance to get by Christmas. So if you're shipping at a certain time: "Hey, we can guarantee delivery by Christmas if you order by December 19." So make sure that people know that and maybe do a little bit of push to get there. Kwanzaa, end-of-year clearance, New Year's. So there's a ton of stuff that you can do. That's just an idea of getting in front of people and keeping it fresh. Pick some of these, not all of them, obviously, but you can do a selection and plan your customer journey where it feels like a flow. So that way, there's actually less risk on you as the business, as well, to make those three days awesome sale days, because you're spreading it across. There's also less competition during these other periods, as well.

Victoria: So 2020 is different. I looked at a really interesting presentation by Facebook, and they compared sales. So first of all, they compared last year, so they of course did their analysis, like they usually do, [for] 2019. They also looked at sales and buying activity in the recession in 2008. And they also looked at it as compared to what was happening during COVID kind of in the peak of March-April-May kind of time period, and their data analysts crunched all of this and said, okay, well, based on those inputs, what are their best predictions for what's going to happen this year?

So of course there's more people buying online, even groups who didn't do so before, even more buying on mobile. One thing I thought was kind of interesting is, self-care sales are on the rise. They gave us specific examples of nail polish. The sales of nail polish went up by over 200% across all these different retail channels, like Alibaba, Amazon, different private brands. During COVID, nail polish sales were totally on the rise. People just needed something to sort of feel better about themselves. And so they translate that into really expecting people to, you know—before we always had the gift giving, but we know that people are buying for themselves. But there might be even more people buying for themselves in 2020, because you also kind of want a reward and something positive.

It's also an election year. That's also going to make it wacky in terms of traffic and activity. So there's a lot of stuff going on outside of the platform.

So be ready to test and adjust. Keep your ads positive. People don't like fear mongering, of course, and Facebook, they don't like that (for compliance reasons anyway), but still, don't be afraid to celebrate. Give people a reason to be happy. Also, some retailers are still having inventory issues. This can be a challenge for some, so make sure that you're covered with your own fulfillment but it can also be an opportunity [for you and] others in your space. Maybe some of the larger brands who rely on these huge purchasing agreements have not been able to get the inventory, and you've got suppliers that you already have relationships [with] where you're getting smaller portions that are still coming through. Then that can be an opportunity for you.

Victoria: It can also be an opportunity to diversify. And it's something that I talk about on the next slide here. So what can you do in 2020? Expand market segments. So focus, do some message and image testing in new audiences now, leading into Q4. And I have some slides just that I shamelessly stole from Facebook that I'll share with you on some really good ways to do that, about how to think about expanding markets and how to test that. The other is to create a more personal experience with gift guides.

Facebook has also come out with Facebook Shop. Marketplace has been around for a while, but they also have some additional [options], like Instagram tagging. There are more places that you can buy on the Facebook platform. So you may want to look at that and be ready to sell wherever people want to buy and create a more personalized experience from that, making sales more interactive, like Facebook Live and Instagram Live. What has happened over this past year? People who didn't even know what Zoom was are, like, using it every day. People are used to, now, an online learning environment. They were never used to that before. People are now so much more geared to doing a Facebook Live or an Instagram Live or interacting that way online, like [inaudible 01:01:12] from what it was last year. So really leverage that.

And different types of promos and different types of ads—They even have something that's a polling ad. I've never tried it. I actually just found it when I was doing some research. I'm going to try it out. It's specifically for videos, for video ads. You can ask a poll at the end of it and have

people choose one or the other. So it's a way to get people to engage and then use that information in your next round of ads. So you can just search "Facebook polling ads." They actually talk a little bit about how to set that up.

Victoria: People buying for themselves: As we mentioned, don't forget that. Self-care has gone up, and Facebook has a bunch of new best practices. The algorithm has changed quite a bit this year, as well, as we all know, which is also, I think, related to a lot of the recent account issues and shutdowns. But make sure that you're really testing best practices ahead of time.

Creative is even more important than it has been in the past. I have a couple of slides on this, but think about mobile-first creative. One thing that they have seen, as well, is: a mix of videos and images in the same ad set has been working really well. And using the Facebook algorithm, kind of leveraging it more to let it do its thing. So bigger audiences, auto placements, really giving the algorithm more room to optimize, and just giving it a bunch of inputs to see what's going to work best for you.

Syncing Klaviyo audiences into Facebook, based on what they've purchased: So Klaviyo is awesome, because you can create segments based on pages they've viewed or what products they've purchased. Syncing those individually as dynamic audiences into Facebook and then creating lookalikes on top of those can vastly expand the different types of lookalikes that you're working with and also can help get that personalized experience, where you're targeting more by product and making it really more specific to what the customer has done with you in the past.

But interestingly, also in a recent webinar by Facebook, they said lookalikes and custom audiences are not getting the returns that they used to. It's just a more crowded space. So sometimes people are really kind of reaching the limits, not only with their initial targets, but even with the lookalikes that they've been using. So creating different kinds of lookalikes, like we talked about with the Klaviyo audiences, is one way to break free of that and not have that be a barrier. But another one is testing a lot of creative, and that's something again in the next few slides we'll go over.

This one I just added in as a bonus. If you can at all create a digital product to sell, please do. It costs you nothing to deliver. And I've worked with a number of clients lately who just had really awesome results. So Svetlana, who's no longer with us, she could not only post free recipes, but sell a recipe book, an online recipe book. Or training programs—again, there's this huge shift toward people consuming digital content and wanting to learn and wanting to engage and being open to that when they wouldn't have [been] before. So really take advantage of that, and if you have an opportunity to create or sell a digital product, that really helps with your inventory issues and can be a huge moneymaker or certainly a way to connect people with the brand, as well. There are just all kinds of benefits around it. So even if you don't think that you could do a digital product, I really encourage you to think again and figure out how you might be able to offer something. They can be relatively easy to put together.

Victoria: So I just ... want to share a few key things. This'll be really quick, because they're just visuals, but these are key excerpts that I shamelessly stole from a Facebook Holiday Unwrapped webinar. I do have a link to it in the resource slide. But here's what their latest input is on creative. So first of all, this is saying [that] in their recent tests, ad sets that contain both an image and video received a 17% higher conversion lift. That's over ones that just had static images and even over ones that maybe just had video. So mixing it up and giving the algorithm more choices of what to put in front of people: some people consume video, some people consume images. If you have multiple of those in the same ad set, then Facebook can show whatever's best for the user at the time and potentially get you better results.

This is, they've published and said, ... how their algorithm thinks about things. They look at the advertiser bid, they look at the estimated action rate, plus the user value, equals the total value. Now, most people think the user value is really where the creative impact comes in, but based on your creative, Facebook's algorithm will actually make a prediction of the estimated action rate and will throttle your results based on that. Like, your CPMs may go up if they don't really feel this algorithm for whatever it's looking for, [that it] doesn't really feel like you've got strong creative. So it's

really important now, more than ever, to be looking at different ways of testing creative.

And these, just to help you think about it: Most of our ecom ads, most direct response ads, look something like this: They show the product, they show a discount or something, and they give a call to action. But they're really encouraging us to think beyond that. So how do we [inaudible 01:06:04]? What happens in this type of ad is Facebook will find the low-hanging fruit, but as we move into a more competitive time on Facebook, your low-hanging fruit is smaller. Because there are more people competing for those same resources that have the low-hanging fruit. So how do you get beyond that if you start to think about what are beyond these high-intent customers and how do you reach them? This was a little tool that Facebook had provided, but super easy. Just think about your product in terms of what would keep some people from buying, what would motivate others to buy, and use those as the foundation to create your ads.

Victoria: So this is considering what motivates different audiences. So if you had created those motivations and one of them happened to be, "This is for a beer thing." Well, there won't be a flavor of this for me. We'll create an ad, "Hey, we have 36 flavors." Or "Why buy soda?" So this is kind of going back to their soda analogy, so, not beer. I'm looking at it, it looks like a beer bottle, but it actually says basil on it. So, okay, odd. But this is looking at creating just different ways—so your ads are not always about the product, but they're about the motivator or the barrier to get people to buy. And that way, that opens up your creative juices as to how you can create different angles.

And then once you even think of one benefit, how do you represent benefits in a different way? So think about rational (and the rational is on the left), product feature, and then emotional. So, three ways to express the same benefit, different angles of creative. They say, how different should the creative be, then they give you just kind of, as a brand, keeping some of the same identity, same font, same general colors, but different concepts. And then in 28 cases where they did this approach and were looking at different slices, 89% of the time they converted new audiences.

And this, I thought, was great. It was talking about a specific device that you put in between your shoulders to [improve] posture. They had been selling it to women. Well, they decided to go beyond that and actually test it for men in the yoga audience, and they were able to get really good results with that. And then actually, because they got good results with that, broaden that and start testing more in the yoga space. They were doing that through creative. So [those are] just ways of really thinking through how ... you expand your audience with the same product.

Victoria: And then lastly, on the images here, it's just in the spirit of keeping things fresh and testing different things, and looking for different ways of expressing the same sale. If your store/you decide Black Friday/Cyber Monday weekend, I'm going to give 50% off, there are different ways to express that. So the one on the left says, "Support local vendors, 50% off." The one in the middle is very specific to men: "A jacket for every guy on your list, at half the cost." Half the cost is the same thing as 50% off. It's a little bit different, and it's also really targeted toward men, in this case. And then a BOGO, buy one, get one, 50% off women's shoes. So these are different ways of expressing the same offer, but they all feel very fresh and they might appeal to different types of viewers.

And then lastly, here [are] just some resources that will be available to you. There's a holiday ... actually, it's not really even a guide—it's a holiday toolkit. They have a guide with all kinds of research and a calendar and a lot of cool planning tools that they have consolidated for Facebook here. They also have a three-part little webinar series called Holiday Unwrapped. All of the images that I shamelessly stole were from this Holiday Unwrapped episode one. It was specifically around creative. I actually thought it was really great.

And then the other thing I like—I don't necessarily, you know, I'm not saying to use their service, but promo.com on their main website has a link called "Calendar." And they show a day by day of different things to promote. And they've got different video templates that you can use to promote it. ... The service itself can be a little bit pricey. So you may or may not use the service, but regardless of whether you use the service, it's absolutely great for inspiration. So that's what I've got.

- Bret: Man, that was a power-packed 10 minutes. Well done. Rapid fire.
- Victoria: I mean, I was worried it might've been more like 30, so hopefully I was okay. I tried to go fast.
- Bret: Yeah, that was fantastic. What an incredible checklist for everyone. So thanks so much for that, Victoria. That was fire. Deven has got a couple of questions.
- Deven: **Yeah, please. So first of all, thank you. Like these guys said, I'm still digesting, trying to take in what you just brought to us fire-hose style, but that was awesome. One of the things that I've been, you know, we spend a lot of money on Facebook, and it's interesting as we see things come and go and evolve over 2020, especially. We've seen a lot of the garbage drop-shippers get kicked out. A lot of this has to do with quality feedback score. And I want to speak to that, or maybe just ask your opinion on this, for members in the group who might not be aware. We've seen our feedback score is consistently very high, you guys. We can maybe even link to it, Bret, in the notes somewhere, where to check your feedback score. I just checked ours. For the very first time, we've always hovered at 4.8 to 4.9. We're at five right now, five out of five.**
- Victoria: That's awesome. Good job.
- Deven: **But I think it merits that, you know, you mentioned your account can get shut down. This really damages you. You don't want to get caught in that situation. Can you tell us some of the things that are contributing to that feedback score and things that, as members of the group here, we should be aware of in how we treat our customers and really what that is made up of?**
- Victoria: Yeah, absolutely. In fact, I just put a link to that, Bret, in chat. So for the resources, it's your customer feedback and it's really your page-quality score, and if you pull that up to look at it, and using the link that will be provided, it goes into, you'll see, the feedback that they have. Facebook will actually reach out to people who have purchased from your store. And you cannot control that. So they reach out to people without you knowing. It's just, you may have seen it yourself sometimes. You get a little pop up at the top of your newsfeed. It says, "Hey, did you purchase from this

company? How was your experience with them?" And they're looking for customer satisfaction, product quality, shipping time, and almost always it's the delivery time that is the one that gets you.

Victoria: If you are finding that you have an issue with delivery time, then yeah, and [with] that one, usually you'll have more data. It'll be higher traffic. A lot of times they don't actually show your customer feedback. But thank you, Bret, for pulling that up. That's exactly where to look. If you have enough traffic and you have feedback, you'll actually have a score. It's between one to five, and you really want to keep it at 4.5 or higher. And it's something that you manage. So if you know that your delivery times are going to be longer, you can submit basically something via that feedback link and say, "Hey, Facebook, I'm dealing with some supplier issues. It's going to be longer. And here's what I'm doing about it. I've sent an email. I've put it on my site," and they'll give a little more leeway and they won't necessarily dock your feedback score while they're polling your customers. So they give you a little bit more leeway.

And you just want to be really up front about it. The tricky thing is that once you are in the doghouse ... (one or under), they actually just stop showing your ads. You won't be able to advertise. And the lower your score is, the more expensive it is to advertise. So for a lot of reasons, you do want to keep an eye on this. But the challenging thing is, it's not something that you can just make a few dials and actually have it go up right away. So, because they're doing blind, kind of reaching out blind, it really is just, hey, be a good citizen and make sure you're communicating properly. Make sure that you are responding quickly on the page, that if anyone has an issue, you're not just deleting it. You're actually answering it.

And on Facebook Fridays, we routinely have people that come on and say, "My feedback score is so low. I'm not able to deliver ads anymore. What can I do about it?" And almost always it's outreach, [over time], asking people to go and leave reviews or give feedback, and you can't ask them to leave positive reviews, but asking them to interact more can accelerate that process and get you back on the good side of the feedback score.

Deven: Great. Thanks, Victoria.

Victoria: Yeah. Was that the only thing?

Deven: Yeah, that's good. That's great. Yeah.

Bret: That's gold, thank you Victoria!

Okay ... saving the best for last, hey, Deven? Super keen to hear your insights m' man! The floor is yours ...

Expert #5

Deven Davis

- **2020 vs. 2018**
- **Urgency of preparation**
- **Importance of VIP**
- **How to get 60–70% open rates**
- **New email segmenting**
- **And so much more!!**

Deven: Okay, great. I think. It's interesting, Victoria talked about a lot of the promotional strategies that I was going to address for email as well. I want to do a quick recap and just talk about 2019, even 2018, versus 2020. Obviously, the landscape is completely different. We're dealing with different dynamics as Victoria already talked about and has been referred to, but I think it's important to understand the preparatory phase right now, and Victoria already referenced this—in my mind, Christmas might as well be tomorrow. In a preparation mindset, we've got to be doing things right now, so that, as Aleks mentioned, we're working on the site.

As everybody already talked about, if we're not thinking about these holiday promotions right now, it's getting close to being too late. There's nothing worse than coming into what is the biggest natural harvest time of the entire year—I don't care what you're selling; this is it; Q4. It's go time, it is game time, we've got to be ready. Twiddling our thumbs and hoping it takes care of itself and hoping that we have a good year is not a solid strategy or approach. We've got to start to take this seriously, start to ... everybody's got a different system. For me, I've shown this before, for me, it's 3 x 5 cards on my desk and I am writing these out frantically, getting my ideas down so that I can go into Q4 and feel positive about what we're doing.

Some of the things that I think are important for us to keep in mind, especially for 2020, are frequency of purchase and really thinking through

our offer. We've got an unknown landscape ... Hopefully we're not coming into this and launching a Q4. Maybe so, but hopefully I think everybody's got some buyer data, we've got historical data to reference.

Some of the things that worked well last year, from the GSD, Bret, that I wanted to bring up: We're really just based on promotions, thinking about promotions, knowing our customers, and adapting the GSD to fit what works well for our brand. We sell jewelry, and nobody needs jewelry, it turns out. It's something that people buy because they want to feel better or they want to give a nice gift. We're not selling food. We're not selling shelter. We're not selling water or air.

Deven: But people still buy jewelry. So, as we get into the mindset, as we think about that, I think ... I was just revisiting our Q4 last year, specifically, Black Friday/Cyber Monday. We had some killer campaigns. I was just going to tell you, first of all, the ones that were best for us were the week of Black Friday and Cyber Monday. I always have things ready to go. I have them scheduled in Klaviyo, but I'm 100% adaptable. So, I saw a bunch of our competitors and I saw big-box stores (larger retail stores) pushing out their promotions early, and I thought, "Well, it's go time." So, those started to fly out on Saturday, almost an entire week before Black Friday last year, and we put out part of our VIP list for an early launch on Black Friday.

We gave it to them early, ... and this is a copy guy's dream. You're talking exclusivity, you're talking about early access, you're making people feel unique and special. If you have a VIP list, email them early. If you don't have one, you should make one in your Klaviyo. It's pretty easy. Define it how you want: multiple purchases or dollar amount spent. But that one performed extremely well for us, and we went back to it often. So, we hit it early and often. The other things that I thought went really well, that were surprising: we had a great Friday. We launched, actually, Thursday on Thanksgiving in the afternoon. We launched to our entire list, and it went well. I think people were shopping. In the US here, we've got an unknown this year. A lot of big-box retail stores are not going to be open on Thanksgiving. That's a change.

That early in-store shopping is changing from what we understand, so taking advantage of email and other venues is going to be really important. Saturday was great for us. Anyway, it goes on and on. The surprise was after Black Friday/Cyber Monday. That's what I want to talk about today: setting the stage for multiple purchases and getting customers to come back multiple times throughout the holiday season and using email to do that. I think for us this year, as we've talked about internal strategy, we're going to manufacture a holiday in mid-October, [an] anniversary sale. So, Roma Designer Jewelry, the anniversary of our founding, we're celebrating mid-October. The thought process here is that after Labor Day, here in the US, people's minds automatically start to turn to the holiday shopping season.

Deven: We have some bargain shoppers. We affectionately call them our old ladies. Our buyer demographic is older females, and they are looking for bargains and they're looking for them early. What we're going to do is launch this anniversary sale in mid-October. We're going to get them to purchase at a decent discount; don't give away the farm in this promotion. But the idea is, we want to encourage repeat purchases, and those people that are buying early, let's get them to buy once and then we're going to come back to them again and again and again and again. So, manufactured holiday mid-October and then strategic product launches, not site-wide sales. Svetlana mentioned that she's going to be launching some new products. There's a great opportunity as we lead up into the holiday to say, "Exclusive product launch. Limited availability"—again, some of those copy triggers.

We want to talk about exclusivity, we want to talk about scarcity, and then bargains, if that's what we're offering. We're going to do the same thing: we sell adjustable chains, we're launching some new adjustable length chains, and we're going to be featuring those the day after Halloween here. So, that's another time that we need to be aware of: day after Halloween, it's Christmas. Like it or not, whether you agree with it or not, it's just reality. If you're selling something, that's when you need to start selling it. So, we're going to come into this, we're doing some exclusive launches, we're going to feed those existing customers we have through email.

Then, as we come into the holiday season, I just want to talk about some things that I'm seeing in our list right now that we're doing to prepare, similar to what Victoria talked about in having your business manager ready to go, you want to have your email account ready to go. Part of what we're doing is just increasing or improving our sending reputation. The strategy, and I'll send some notes over and we can put this out there, but the strategy is right here. It is hyper-segmentation. This is how sophisticated I get—again, you guys, I'm embarrassed to say how many note cards [there are] around my desk right now—but the segmentation is huge. And I want to tell you what I'm doing in this strategy, and this is a golden nugget: I am staggering my sends. My first group is hyper-engaged. Those are people that have opened 25 times or more in the last 30 days. Basically, if I'm emailing every day, these people are opening every email. I send to those people first. What that does is, it signals to Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo, that the people want to get my email. They're opening it; they're clicking on it.

Deven: I've been doing this for the last about a month and a half, and I'm almost ready to share it with the group on a large scale, but this is huge. We're getting between 60 and 70 percent open rate in that group, and that's amazing. Thirty minutes later, we're sending to the ultra-engaged group: those are people that open 15 or more, and I'm excluding the previous group that I sent to. So, I'm choosing the group that I'm sending to, I'm excluding the previous sends, and those are between 35% and 40% open rate. Again, a strong signal to the email providers that people want our emails. The next tier is super-engaged and super-buyers. Those are people that have opened five or more in the last 30 days. Those are good. We get a lot of purchases out of those.

Then, engaged means they've opened at least once in the last 30. And then, I sent it to all. Now, not every day—here's the strategy: You have a nested segmentation like that, and then I send to the hyper-engaged group every day. I send to the ultra-engaged group every day. I don't send to the super-engaged group every day; I send them about every other day. The engaged group I send about every third or fourth day. Then all-active subscribers, I send maybe once or twice a week with a mix of content and promotions. If I'm sending to the entire list twice a week, the all-actives, one will be a content send where I'm sending them like an article about a

promotion that we're doing that week, so if we're featuring a particular type of jewelry, Roman glass jewelry for example is 2000-year-old glass that's excavated just outside of Jerusalem, it's got a cool story. I send a blog article about this process of excavation and verification and certificate of authenticity, that sort of thing with a little promo in it.

Deven: Then later that week, I'll send a straight-out promotional email about Roman glass. So, this strategy is very simple, it's very straightforward, it is a way to warm up our list, and it's got to be done. It's something we've got to do, similar to Facebook. We've got to warm up our list as we get into the holiday season. If you haven't been emailing your list, and then all of a sudden you just start bombarding them with an email every day, your unsubscribe rate is going to be super high, your spam rate's going to be super high. Don't be afraid to email your list now. In fact, I would encourage you to actively email at least a portion of your list every single day right now to warm up that list and get them ready for the holiday send season. So, in a nutshell, in the few minutes here that I've got to share, that's one insight that I wanted to share in getting your yourself ready for holiday email sending.

Bret: **Right. That was awesome, Devon. I got a question, brother, that was cool. With the five segments you've got, you said you emailed the hyper first and then the other tiers. So, how does that look like on a day, like, how many emails do you send a day? Is that like sending the morning email and then the mid-morning email?**

Deven: Great question. Like, on a Monday, I don't email Monday morning, I email Monday afternoon. People's inboxes are full on Monday morning and they're getting caught up with their weekend emails. They're going to work, they're pissed off already, they're not happy to be at work, so I'm not going to be in their inbox trying to fight for space on Monday morning. I am, however, Monday afternoon, going to send a content piece. Everybody's different, every list is different. For us, we have a great send time between 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. our time. So, I would send, in this example, to the top tier, the hyper-engaged, at 5:00 p.m. I'd send to the second tier, the ultra-engaged, at 5:30 p.m. I'd send to the super-engaged at 6:00 p.m. Then, I actually let the process take place for a minute there.

So, I send to the fourth tier at 7:00 p.m. and the fifth tier at 8:00 p.m.. What that does, and again, I want to be transparent here, if I'm sending to all actives and I'm excluding everybody else that I've sent to before, the open rate on that particular send is not very high—it's like 4%. So, I don't send it very frequently, I send it once or twice a week because I don't want that to affect my sender reputation either. But, by sending to those tiers and then excluding the previous sends, that's how I do it. So, there's a three-hour window where I schedule them to cascade through those tiers. Again, on Tuesday, I don't send to all five tiers; I only send to three tiers. Then, I'm not going to send to all five tiers again until probably Thursday or Saturday. So, I'm sending just selections throughout the week.

Bret: That's gold, man. That's really smart. Yeah. Cool. I love that. Any questions from you guys? I think that's going to be super helpful, mate. Any other gems you got?

Victoria: **I've got a question. First of all, that's brilliant. I love the segmenting and definitely a good point about warming up the list now, because if you're going from hardly any emails to a ton of emails during the holiday, just think about how many other people are doing that. It's not only bad for you, but given everyone else doing that at the same time, it's really bad for people getting all these emails. You mentioned that you're doing it by the number of emails that they get. Is it percentage based?**

Deven: Yeah. Let me make sure I understand the question, Victoria. I'm creating these segments based on the number of emails that they open.

Victoria: **I guess my question is, do you routinely create opportunities for people to move up in that ladder? If they're opening 25 a day, but then your second tier is only getting 15 a month, they never have the opportunity to get to that first tier.**

Deven: Right. Great clarification. Let me walk through this one more time, just because I think it's important to understand this. Top tier for me, that hyper-engaged group, I take a 30-day window and people that are in that group have opened 25 emails in the last 30 days, so that's the hyper-engaged. The ultra-engaged is what I call it, they've opened 15 emails in the last 30 days. The super-engaged is five emails in the last 30

days—not that they've received, but that they've opened. Then, engaged is one or more emails that they've opened in the last 30 days. And then all-active. You bring up a really great point ... I'll actually put these together, Bret, and we can send them out, these segments, to everyone.

Bret: That's great, buddy!

Deven: One of the things that I think is important, yes, is to provide opportunities to move up. The all-actives—I want to continue to get them into the engaged, the super-engaged, the ultra engaged, but I let them, instead of ... The reason I don't email everybody every day, (a) is because our unsubscribe rate is going to be really high, but it gives us a way to let people self-select. If they're opening everything I send to them, they're going to automatically move up into one of these higher tiers of our segment. By sending twice a week to the least-engaged segment, they do have an opportunity, if they'd like to see more; they're telling me through their actions—you know what, I'm going to click on these things twice a week—and if you do that for a few weeks in a row, you're going to move into one of the higher engagement tiers. I send to the engaged group probably three to four times a week, and if they do that consistently over a few weeks, they're going to move into the super-engaged group. If the super-engaged group, opening 15 times a month or so on, is going to click on everything I'm sending them, they're quickly going to move into the higher tier. So yes.

Victoria: Got it. Got it.

Deven: That make sense?

Victoria: Yeah. It does. Thanks.

Bret: Yeah, that's real smart. Awesome, mate. Any more questions guys?

Awesome, guys. That's a wrap. Thanks for your time, guys. I appreciate it. Have an awesome rest of the week. I'll keep you all updated. And for those of you watching or reading this, make sure you go on the Facebook group and thank all the guys on the call for their time. They're doing this selflessly and just add so much value. Make sure you look up any other further resources that these guys have shared and, like you've heard: get

prepared, get in early, and make it a super-successful Q4. So, that's a wrap, guys. Thanks for your time. We'll catch you in the FB group!

Deven: Awesome. Thanks everyone.

Bret: Later. Bye.

BONUS SECTION

After the Guest Expert call, one of our all-time favorite EI superstars, **Ane Susanto** (the Banner-Bashing Ninja), sent me an email with her thoughts and suggestions for getting the most out of BFCM, 2020. Like all of Ane's posts, it was too good to leave out!

Expert #6

Ane Susanto

- Getting an early start
- Good, better, best
- Importance of VIP
- How to get 60–70% open rates
- New email segmenting
- And so much more!!

Hey guys! Here's my input for how to get the most out of this year's BFCM.

There are three things from the 2019 BFCM GSD that made a big impact. I also want to share what I wish I'd done differently! I hope it's helpful!

Getting an early start

I had a tendency to procrastinate on the holiday marketing. Any marketing, really. Having an action plan laid out for me and arriving in early October in the form of the September GSD gave me the exact kick in the butt I needed to not procrastinate last year. Having 30 days to implement everything made the whole promotion, HOTLIST through post-BFCM, feel much more doable.

Good > Better > Best action plan

First off, getting something, ANYTHING, sent out is better than nothing (which I had done in the previous year, possibly two).

Looking back at last year's BFCM GSD, the "Good, Better, Best" section, I started with the goal of going all in with the BEST option but quickly got freaked out when I went straight to read the BEST list.

Which is why I loved the Good > Better > Best options. Going back to the three-stage action plan helped me tackle the process in manageable bites. I instantly felt less overwhelmed with everything I had to do to get to my goal of implementing BEST.

Even with implementing just the GOOD promotion, I was already ahead of what I had done the prior year, which, to remind you, was NOTHING. That small win gave me motivation to implement the BETTER promotion. Once BETTER was done, I had the momentum to hit my target of going all in with the BEST promotion.

Seeing the action plan laid out in three stages helped me "Slight Edge" myself through it.

Reminder emails ... specifically sent at different intervals throughout the day

Prior to this GSD, I had been scheduling most of my campaigns to go out between 3:00–5:00 p.m. with no rhyme or reason to the timing—and usually one email a day.

This aspect of the campaigns—sending multiple reminders at different intervals—got me curious about the best time of day to send emails, which led me to do a deep dive into my GA data. Filtering traffic from email only, I discovered a chunk of conversions 12:00–4:00 p.m. with a big spike coming in from 7:00–8:00 p.m.

Sure enough, the 3–4 p.m. and 7–9 p.m. reminder emails, per the GSD, had the best open and conversion rates. I adjusted the timing of the Last Chance reminders to 8:00 p.m., per my GA data, and they were absolute fire!

One thing I wish I had done better ...

Build my SMS list prior to BFCM

I dragged my feet on implementing SMS marketing. So when I saw it was part of the BEST plan of action, I decided to get out of my own way and just get something going. I got a few sales from the HOTLIST, but the list was so small at that point that the numbers were not significant. But ROAS on SMS marketing has averaged 7000X since I added it last year versus 3X at best for FB ads. If I had put more time and effort into building my SMS list in advance of BFCM, the SMS strategy in the BEST promotion could have packed a harder punch with bigger profit.

Other things ...

There are two things, not specific to the September 2019 GSD, that were game changers for me.

Getting Google Analytics installed and learning how to interpret the data

For most of us, October to December brings in the most traffic to our stores. So getting GA installed, figuring out what data is important to our business, and setting up the reports so it's easy to read—PRIOR to the busiest time of the year—is crucial! Even if we're not making RO tweaks during the holiday rush, we gather so much data to move forward with, that it's just a no brainer to get GA installed well in advance of the BFCM crunch. Learning how to interpret that information and testing and making decisions based on data, and not intuition or emotion, has been game changing for me.

Success by subtraction

In 2018, I was on the hook for three businesses. It should have been a seven-figure year for me personally. On Black Friday 2018, I had ONE SALE across all three businesses. I shared that as a screenshot in the group as a "Learn from Aunty Ane" moment.

At the beginning of 2019, after lots of soul searching and Thinking Time, I dropped two businesses altogether and put all of my focus into one—a POD store. That subtraction gave me the time to make smart, data-driven decisions and put in more productive effort, especially leading up to Q4.

Once I got focused on the one business, I decided to subtract **IN** the store, too. I poured through my GA data, sales and expenses reports, and customer service logs. I discovered that three of the four product lines on this store were responsible for over 95% of the customer service issues and refunds, yet made \$0 profit—less than \$0, in fact. So I subtracted all three product lines completely, focused on selling one product line, the profitable one, which also happened to be fulfilled by an amazing fulfillment partner.

The result was more revenue—and profit!—for BF/CM and the Christmas 2019 season (30 days, 11/15–12/15) made more than most of 2018 for all three businesses COMBINED.

And although we nearly tripled the number of orders for this store, the number of customer issues and refunds went down drastically. We had to refund nearly 50% of the orders for BFCM 2018 versus ZERO refunds for BFCM 2019. Nearly 70% of the orders from BFCM 2018 came back with customer service issues versus less than 1% for BFCM 2019. The most common email we get now is the customer thanking us for the post-purchase discounts prior to them using it.

The best part of all this is that customer happiness is through the roof. Close to 100% of the reviews that come in are 5-star and cover everything from product quality to customer service. I haven't had to write ad copy in a while. I just use customer reviews because they outperform any other ad I test.

So that one decision to subtract three product lines and focus on one led to all this goodness.

Thank you Ane! That was pure GOLD, as always.

Alrighty ... That's all folks!

You know what's next. Go and "GSD" and then report back in the Facebook group with your results. Or do a post in the group to say, "THANK YOU" to Jeremy Friedland, Svetlana Zhitnitsky, Aleks Nikoloski, Victoria Griggs, Deven Davis & Ane Susanto for their awesome shares!

Tanner, Matt, and Bret