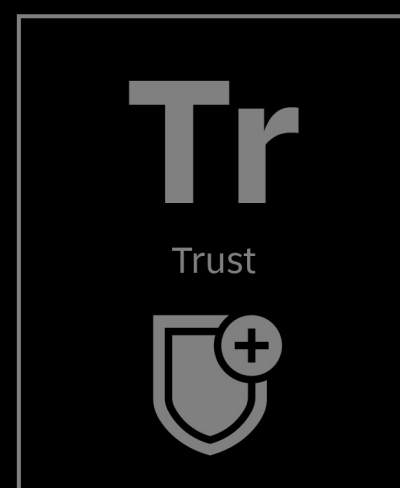
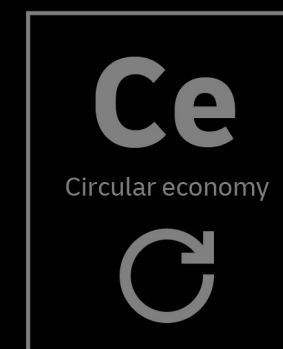
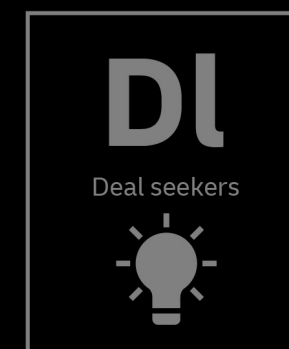
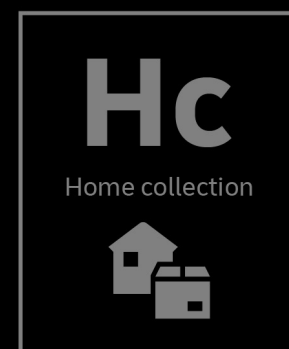
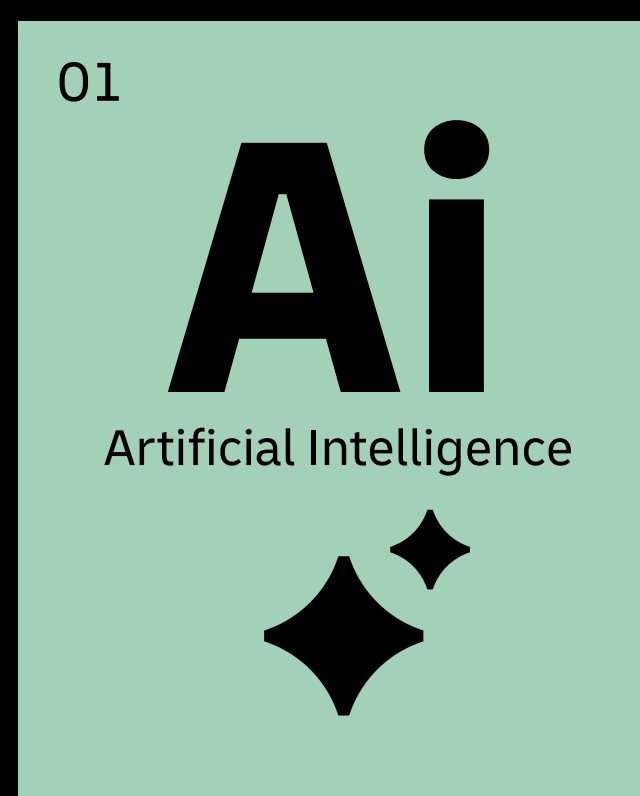


# The new formula for Black Friday



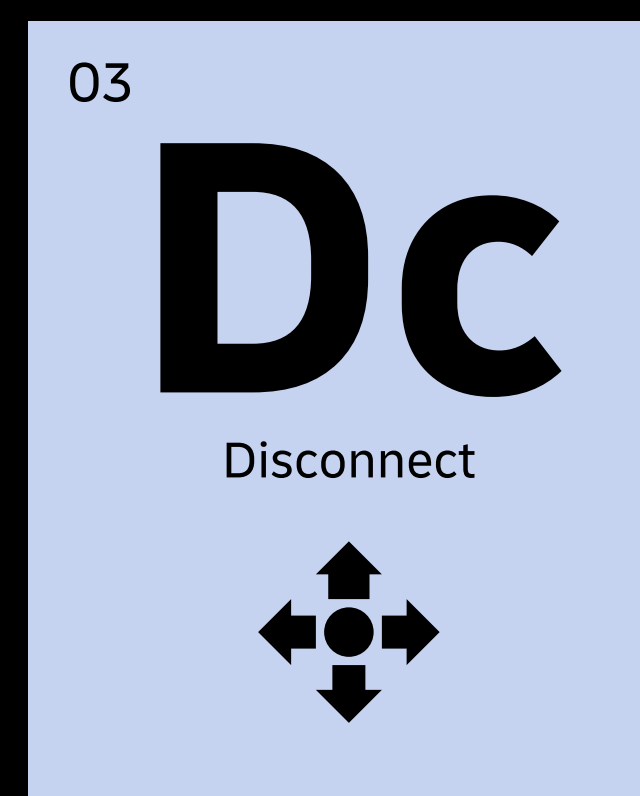
## The new element in the bargain hunt

AI-assisted shoppers are emerging  
as Black Friday's biggest buyers.



## The element changing demand

Younger shoppers are driving  
participation, but their motivations  
reveal a generational twist.



## The element that doesn't add up

Businesses are embracing Black Friday  
at a higher rate than shoppers, while  
resale, subscriptions and other models  
broaden what participation looks like.



## The element that completes the sale

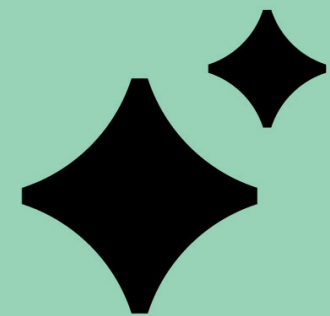
Delivery, returns and out-of-home  
choice are becoming fundamental to  
the Black Friday experience.

**Start exploring**  
[dhl.com/black-friday](https://dhl.com/black-friday)

01

# Ai

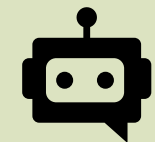
Artificial Intelligence



## AI is rewriting the bargain hunt

Aa

AI-assisted shoppers



**50%**

Bought during Black Friday

**41%**

Expect to buy more in future

VS

DL

Deal seekers



**42%**

Bought during Black Friday

**29%**

Expect to buy more in future

## AI is becoming the new Black Friday price checker

AI chat

Where can I find this the cheapest?



Black Friday Deal



Black Friday Deal



Black Friday Deal

# 88%

**88%** of Black Friday shoppers have used or plan to use AI for price comparisons.

## AI is changing the formula behind the Black Friday bargain hunt

Shoppers are using it to compare prices, find products and make decisions faster, and AI-assisted shoppers are already spending more than traditional Deal seekers. It is quickly becoming one of the defining elements of the event.

### AI shopping assistants: shoppers are using them, businesses are enabling them



**47%**

**47%** of Black Friday shoppers have used AI to browse or buy.



**38%**

**38%** of e-commerce businesses enable browsing or buying through AI.

### The next step for AI? Businesses see a decision-maker, shoppers aren't so sure



**35%**



**66%**

**35%** of Black Friday shoppers are likely to let AI make shopping or purchasing decisions for them in the next 5 years.

**66%** of e-commerce businesses believe shoppers are likely to do so.

02

GZ

Gen Z

Ce

Circular economy

Co

Conversion

En

Engage

Bv

Behavior

Lo

Loyalty

More trust.

More spending.

A generational twist.

Younger shoppers are driving participation, spending more and trusting deals more. But there’s a generational twist: while younger consumers are more likely to treat themselves, older shoppers use Black Friday to plan ahead and spread the cost.

More likely to buy

Mi

Millennials

47%

Millennials & Gen Z lead Black Friday purchasing, with **47% of each demographic** having already made a purchase, ahead of **Gen X 39%** and **Baby Boomers 30%**.

More likely to trust

Gz

Gen z

91%

Gen Z are the most trusting of seasonal offers, with **91%** trusting retailer prices and promotions during key shopping moments, compared with **89%** of **Millennials**, **86%** of **Gen X** and **80%** of **Baby Boomers**.

More likely to buy more

Gz

Gen z

41%

Gen Z are set to drive future growth, with **41%** planning to increase Black Friday spending over the next five years, ahead of **Millennials 33%**, **Gen X 23%** and **Baby Boomers 13%**.

Two mindsets:

Think ahead or treat yourself?

The generations using Black Friday to shop early and spread the costs

B

Baby Boomers

36%

X

Gen X

33%

M

Millennials

30%

Z

Gen Z

27%

The generations using Black Friday as an excuse to treat themselves

36%

Gen Z

33%

Millennials

30%

Gen X

27%

Baby Boomers

\*Data from Black Friday shopper segment on what motivates them to shop online during seasonal holidays.

03

DC

Disconnect

# The Black Friday equation differs on either side of the checkout

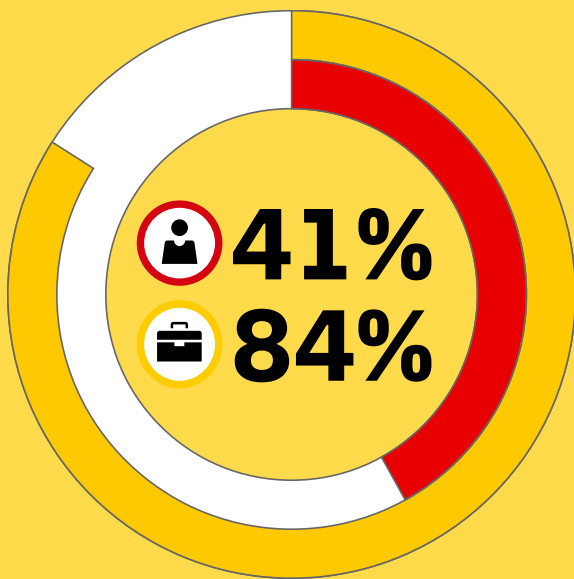
Businesses are heavily invested in the event, while shopper participation remains much lower. But expectations for future growth are beginning to line up, suggesting there is still plenty of room to bring more shoppers into the mix.

Ex

Experience

Op

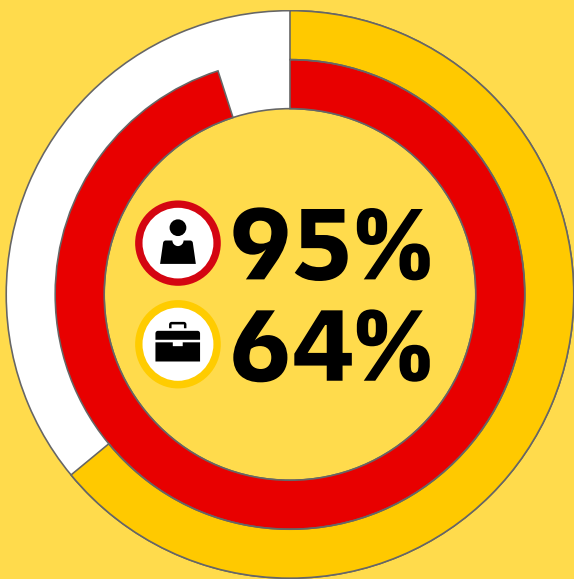
Opportunity



## Business participation far outpaces shoppers

**41%** of online shoppers purchase during Black Friday.

**84%** of e-commerce businesses run promotions.



## Sales, however, are closer than they seem

**95%** of Black Friday shoppers expect to buy the same or more.

**64%** of e-commerce businesses expect sales to increase.

### The shoppers buying into Black Friday

| AI-assisted shopper       | 50% |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Subscription shopper      | 48% |
| Secondhand shopper        | 48% |
| Hands-free shopper        | 48% |
| Easily influenced shopper | 48% |
| Brand lover               | 47% |
| Social shopper            | 46% |
| Global shopper            | 46% |
| App-first shopper         | 44% |
| Eco shopper               | 43% |
| Convenience shopper       | 43% |
| Deal seeker               | 42% |

### The businesses buying into Black Friday

| Medium enterprise             | 87% |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Large enterprise              | 87% |
| Eco-friendly sellers          | 87% |
| Pre-owned/refurbished sellers | 87% |
| Hybrid business               | 86% |
| Marketplace sellers           | 86% |
| Subscription sellers          | 86% |
| Social media sellers          | 85% |
| Cross border sellers          | 85% |
| Small enterprise              | 83% |
| B2B business                  | 81% |
| B2C business                  | 80% |
| Micro enterprise              | 78% |
| Sole trader                   | 70% |

DL

Deal seekers



## Surprise find!

**Deal seekers aren't Black Friday loyalists.** Always on the hunt for value, they're more likely to wait for the right deal than buy simply because it's Black Friday.

Ce

Circular economy



## Surprise find!

**Circular sellers are Black Friday front-runners.** Eco-friendly and pre-owned/refurbished sellers are among the most likely to participate, challenging the idea that Black Friday is all about buying new.

En

Engage

Bv

Behavior

St

Shopper trust

Dy

Discovery

04

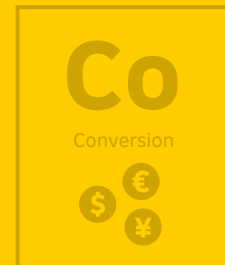
# De

Delivery



## Price sparks interest, but convenience seals the deal

Winning the sale is only one element of Black Friday. From fast, free delivery to easy returns and greater out-of-home choice, convenience after the checkout can determine whether Black Friday shoppers buy, abandon their basket or come back again.



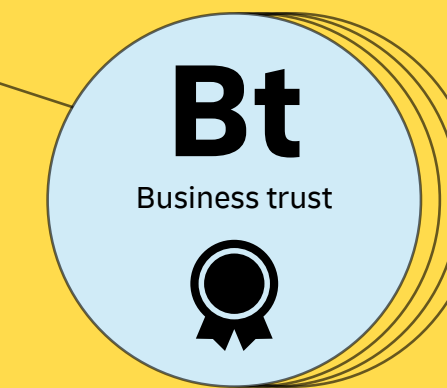
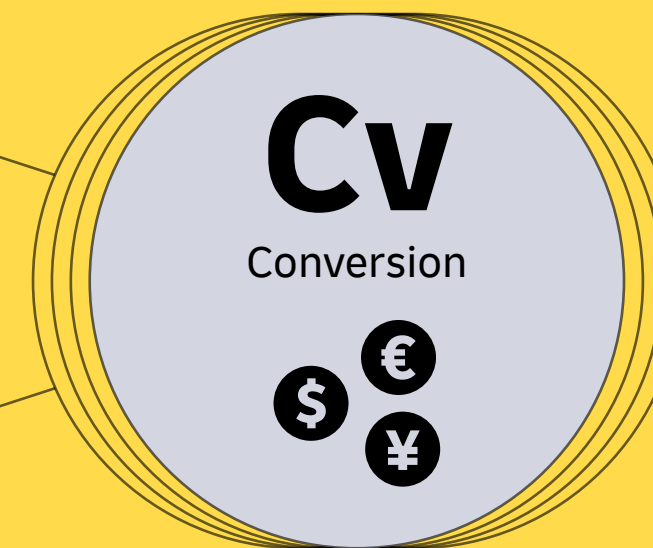
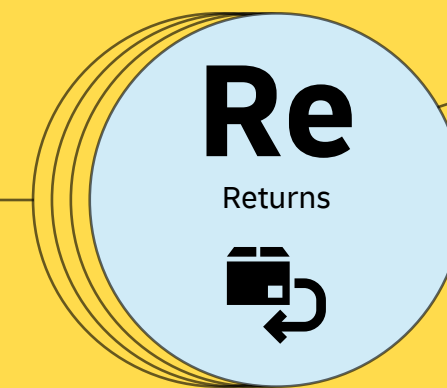
### The conversion formula

Delivery + Returns + Trust = Conversion

**9 in 10** Black Friday shoppers state that above all, they want fast, free delivery and easy returns.

**1 in 3** Black Friday shoppers are most likely to abandon at the shipping-options stage.

**74%** would abandon without their preferred returns options.



**77%** of Black Friday shoppers would not shop with a brand if they did not trust its delivery or returns provider.

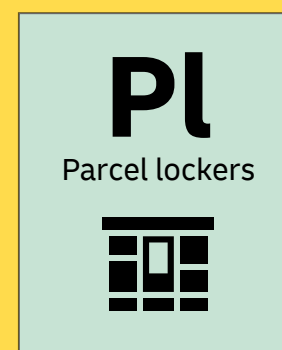
**56%** of e-commerce businesses would avoid a cheaper logistics provider with poor brand trust.

### More parcel shops, more lockers, more choice:

**45%** of Black Friday shoppers want more out-of-home locations for their deliveries and returns.



Black Friday shopper delivery preference:



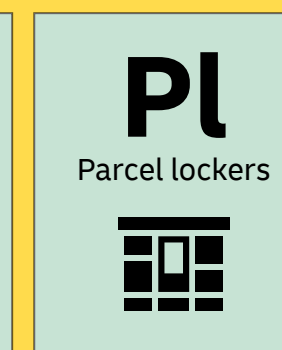
**72%**

**17%**

**10%**



Black Friday shopper returns preference:



**38%**

**30%**

**27%**

**15%**

of Black Friday shoppers typically return online orders.

**65%**

of Black Friday shoppers use an out-of-home location to return an item.

**51%**

of businesses say out-of-home locations are essential for securing sales and repeat business.

# Don't just follow e-commerce trends. Get ahead of them.

Visit the DHL eCommerce Insights Hub for exclusive  
research, growth insights and practical advice  
designed to help ambitious businesses scale.

**Start exploring**  
[dhl.com/black-friday](https://dhl.com/black-friday)

**Ps**

Positioning



**Tr**

Trust



**Co**

Conversion



**Bv**

Behavior



**Lo**

Loyalty



**Ce**

Circular economy



**Ch**

Channels



**Iv**

Innovation



**Hc**

Home collection



**Bb**

Baby Boomers



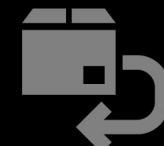
**Ps**

Parcel shops



**Re**

Returns



**Hd**

Home delivery



**St**

Shopper trust



**Op**

Opportunity



**En**

Engage



**Dy**

Discovery



**DL**

Deal seekers



**Ex**

Experience



**Gx**

Gen X



**Hc**

Home collection



**Bt**

Business trust



## Methodology:

This report draws on insights from Black Friday shoppers identified within our global online shopper survey, covering 29,000 consumers across 29 countries, alongside responses from 5,800 e-commerce businesses in 28 countries. The full methodology can be found [here](#). These findings form part of the [2026 E-Commerce Trends Report](#), which explores shopper expectations and business responses across eight key trends shaping e-commerce today.

## Key:



Online  
shoppers



E-commerce  
businesses