

CORE
OPTIMISATION
THE RESULTS AGENCY

THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

PREPARING FOR PEAK
EDITION

INDUSTRY ANALYSIS
OCTOBER 2025

The Digital Landscape

Preparing for Peak Edition

Navigating peak season is one of the toughest challenges for eCommerce brands. Competition intensifies, ad costs surge, and consumer expectations rise making it harder than ever to cut through the noise.

With this in mind, we've created this special Preparing for Peak Digital Landscape report, crafted by Core Optimisation's digital experts.

Our goal is to help brands simplify the chaos of peak season with clear, actionable insights. Inside, you'll find strategies and practical advice around data measurement, digital strategy, GA4, PPC, SEO and Paid Social, giving you the tools to protect profitability and capture opportunity when it matters most.

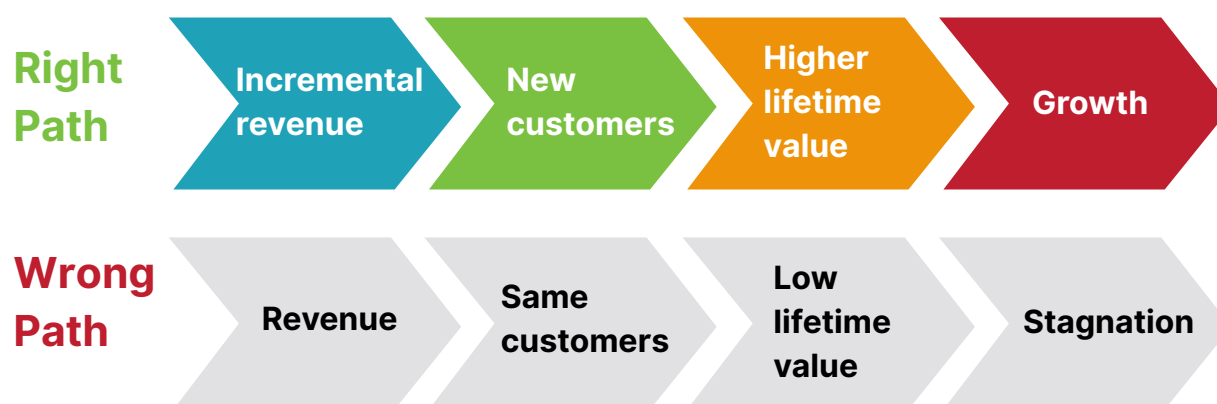
Data Measurement

As we head into **peak season**, the biggest opportunity and challenge for eCommerce brands lies in measurement that connects **activity** to commercial **outcomes**. Too often, reporting stops at revenue or ROAS. In reality, the winners in peak are those who understand which channels are bringing in incremental revenue, new customers, and higher lifetime value. This year, the cost of media is **higher**, competition is **fiercer**, and consumer journeys are **fragmented** across search, social, marketplaces, and offline influences. Without **robust measurement**, brands risk optimising for the **wrong outcomes**, driving volume without **profitability**, or doubling down on loyal customers while **neglecting growth**.

Here is a tip from our COO, David Brett: *“The opportunity is to put measurement at the **heart** of planning: define success upfront (new vs. repeat customers, margin per order, retention value) and ensure tracking is aligned **before** campaigns launch. Live dashboards and focused outcome based communication with your agency partner allow brands to **pivot budgets** in real time, focusing spend where it drives true **business impact**. In peak season, every euro must earn its **place**. Measurement isn’t just reporting; it’s the difference between **chasing noise** and **capturing profitable growth**.”*



Revenue ≠ Profit



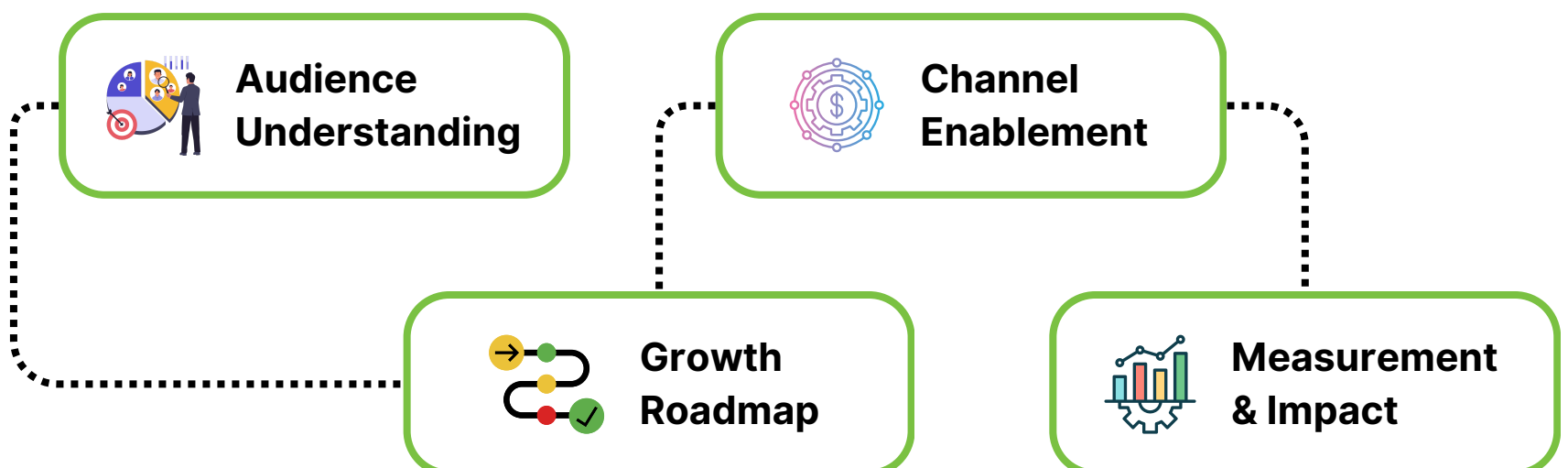
Digital Strategy

Peak success starts with **understanding your audience** not just who they are, but **what** drives them to **act**. Too many brands plan around platforms instead of people. By using real data and behavioural insights, you can focus on the channels and messages that truly **influence results**. As AI reshapes how customers search and shop, trust and credibility are now key conversion **drivers**. The aim isn't reach for its own sake but relevance, ensuring every decision ties back to commercial impact. When insight, execution, and measurement align, you turn short term demand into **lasting growth**.

Here is a tip from our Director of Digital, Ger Hayden: *"Start with audience **understanding**, not assumptions and use **real data** to shape where and how you show up. Balance awareness and performance activity to capture **both** short term wins and long term **loyalty**. Invest in **credibility** and **consistency** across all touchpoints, because in peak season, **trust** is the ultimate conversion **driver**."*



The Four Stages to Sustainable Growth



Google Analytics

One of the biggest challenges we're seeing in GA4 right now isn't the tracking setup itself, but **misconfigured** consent banners blocking GA4 from recording **key events**. If transactions go untracked, revenue is **under reported**, attribution becomes **unreliable**, and audience signals weaken directly impacting campaign optimisation. Many brands don't even **realise** this is happening, but it can derail optimisation at the busiest time of the year. Ahead of peak, reviewing consent flows, cross-domain setups, and Google Consent Mode is one of the **most important audits** an eCommerce team can run.

Here is a tip from our GA4 Expert, Tony Newlands: *"Getting consent and tracking right isn't just about GDPR compliance, it's about **protecting** the revenue insights your business runs on. If GA4 is **blind** at checkout, you're flying peak season **without instruments**. The brands who fix this **before** Black Friday will **scale budgets** with confidence, while others will make **costly decisions** based on **flawed** data."*



Consent vs Insight: GA4 Checklist



Google Consent Mode is properly implemented



Opt-in purchases can trigger events



Consent preserved during cross-domain flow

Search Engine Optimisation

Many brands still create **fresh** Black Friday or Christmas pages each year, only to struggle with **indexing** and **ranking** in time for **peak**. A stronger approach is to build an evergreen **“Peak Hub”**, one central page that stays **live year-round** and is **refreshed seasonally**. This builds search engine trust, stabilises rankings earlier, and captures demand as it spikes. With consistent updates, it compounds **authority** and **momentum** every year, making your brand more visible when it **matters most**.

Here is a tip from our Head of SEO, Brian Conlon: “Don’t start from **scratch** every year. Keep one dedicated **“Peak Hub”** page live, refresh it ahead of each peak event, and make it your **central launchpad** for key offers, FAQs, and links to bestsellers. This simple shift means faster **visibility**, stronger **rankings**, and more ready-to-buy visitors at **peak**.”



Evergreen Authority Builds Momentum



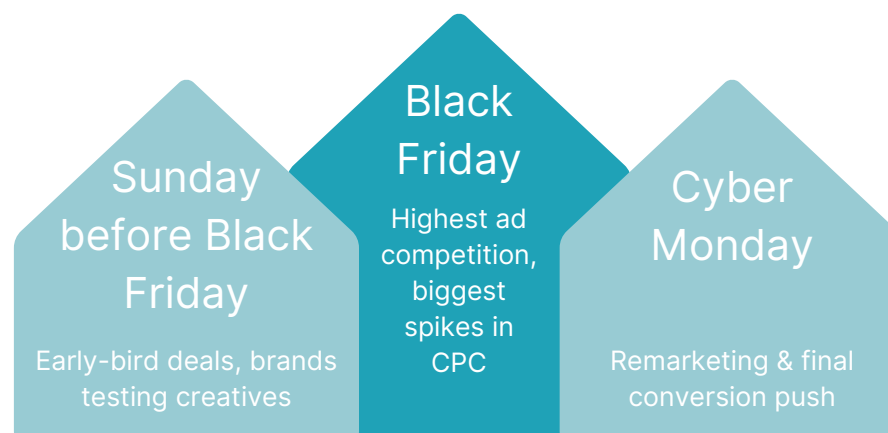
Paid Search Advertising

Paid search costs during peak are climbing fast. CPAs on Google Ads rose **26%** over **Black Friday** last year, and with the new “**triple peak**” (Sunday before Black Friday, Black Friday, and Cyber Monday) it will only get tougher. The answer **isn't** to throw budget at the problem, but to plan **early**. Strong seasonal creative, first-party audience segmentation, and giving AI bidding **time** to learn all combine to keep CPCs under control and return on ad spend **maximised**. Brands that treat peak like a sprint will struggle; those that prepare early will thrive.

Here is a tip from our Paid Search Expert, Aaron Griffin: “Smart PPC in peak **isn't** about **bigger budgets**, it's about **precision**. By feeding Google's AI high-quality signals early, you **avoid** wasted spend when CPCs **spike**. Layer in creative that matches seasonal demand and remarketing to **hesitant** shoppers, and you turn cost pressure into **competitive advantage**.”



The Triple Peak Explained



Paid Social Advertising

Success in peak season **isn't** about spending **more**, it's about **preparing smarter**. Reviewing last year's performance reveals which audiences, creatives, and offers **actually** delivered results. With that **insight**, brands can design highly relevant campaigns built around segmented audiences: repeat buyers, new shoppers, and seasonal browsers. Pairing these segments with **urgency-led creative** and tailored offers, such as bundles or early-bird discounts, drives **both attention** and **action** in a crowded market.

Here is a tip from our Paid Social Expert, Roisin Ryan: *"Treat your peak campaigns like a **conversation** with **different audiences**, not a one-size-fits-all blast. Repeat buyers want **exclusivity**, seasonal shoppers need **urgency**, and new customers need **storytelling** that builds trust. The brands who **plan** creative and offers to match each segment will see the **biggest wins**."*



One Audience ≠ All Audiences



What is happening in the world of Digital Marketing?

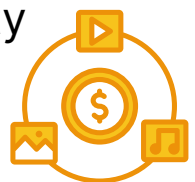
Early Bird is Back

Many brands are shifting budgets earlier, front-loading campaigns in October to beat rising CPCs and inbox fatigue in November. Watch for retailers launching “pre pre Black Friday” events to capture spend before competitors even kick off.



Shoppable Video

TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Instagram Reels are doubling down on in-video shopping features. During last year’s Cyber Week, TikTok Shop saw a 150% increase in conversions. Expect more brands to integrate direct “buy now” functionality into short-form video campaigns this year.



Triple Peak

Google is pushing the idea of a “triple peak”, the Sunday before Black Friday, Black Friday itself, and Cyber Monday. Expect steeper competition and higher costs concentrated in these three days, but also opportunities to win with precise remarketing and strong creative tested ahead of time.



Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Rethink Reach:** Focus spend where your audience actually converts, not just where you get seen.
- ✓ **Evergreen Hubs Win:** Keep one peak page live year-round to build trust and rank faster.
- ✓ **Fix Consent Flows:** Misconfigured banners can block GA4 from recording purchases.
- ✓ **Win Seasonal Peaks:** Jewellery PPC works best when campaigns dial up for gifting moments like Valentine's or Christmas.

Discover How We Can Help

Get in touch with our Business Development Manager, Mike Flynn, to discover how we can help you thrive in today's digital landscape.

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