

FOR SHOPIFY STORES DOING \$100K-\$500K A YEAR

The AI Shopping & BFCM Readiness Playbook

A six-week operating plan to fix what stops a sale, test how AI shopping channels see your catalog, and measure what actually paid off.

01 Diagnose

02 Fix

03 Test

04 Measure



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A field guide, not another optimization backlog

Most BFCM advice hands you a 60-item checklist and wishes you luck. This playbook does the opposite. It helps a lean Shopify team decide what matters, fix it in the right order, and prove the work was worth doing.

WHO IT'S FOR

Shopify store owners and small teams doing **\$100K–\$500K in annual revenue** who are preparing for Black Friday and Cyber Monday 2026 and want to be ready for AI-assisted shopping without turning the store into a project office.

WHAT IT WON'T DO

Promise you an AI ranking, a guaranteed recommendation, or a revenue lift. Nobody can honestly promise those. It will help you remove the problems that cost you sales in **every** channel, AI included.

What you'll walk away with

01

A ranked issue list across six readiness areas, with owners and deadlines.

02

A clean data baseline for the 20 products that matter most this season.

03

A tested offer journey from product page to order confirmation, on mobile and desktop.

04

An AI discovery log built from repeatable shopping queries, not one-off screenshots.

05

A dated six-week plan that ends with a change freeze before peak traffic.

06

A post-BFCM decision memo that tells you what to keep, fix, stop, and test next.

How to use the worksheets

Eight worksheets are marked with a dark **WORKSHEET** tab. Print them, or copy the columns into a shared spreadsheet so everyone works from one list. Work through the chapters in order the first time. After that, return to the worksheets before every major campaign.

Publication note. Published October 2026 by QeRetail. Shopify features such as Agentic Storefronts, channel eligibility, and reporting vary by store and change over time. Check your own Shopify admin and the Shopify Help Center before acting on any feature-specific step. Third-party statistics are aggregate industry figures; your store's results will differ. © 2026 QeRetail. All rights reserved.

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 STARTING LATE?

Go straight to **W8, the two-hour sprint**. It covers the checkout, pricing, and stock problems that hurt most, in the order that matters.

LOOK FOR THESE

Expert Take boxes give you the practitioner caveat most guides skip.

Measure progress bars tell you what to track so you can prove a fix worked.

WHY THIS BFCM IS DIFFERENT

AI didn't replace the BFCM fundamentals.

It raised the cost of getting them wrong.

Black Friday lands on November 27, 2026. Cyber Monday follows on November 30. Your campaigns may be scheduled and your stock may be on order. But one question matters more than any of that: what could stop a shopper from finding the right product, trusting your offer, or completing a purchase, and which of those problems should you fix first?

20%

of global Cyber Week 2025 orders were influenced by AI and agents, tied to **\$67B** in sales.

[Salesforce, Dec 2025](#)

\$336.6B

in global online spend over Cyber Week 2025, up 7% year over year.

[Salesforce, Dec 2025](#)

31%

higher conversion from generative-AI referrals to retail sites versus other traffic, 2025 holiday season.

[Adobe, 2026](#)

693%

year-over-year growth in generative-AI traffic to US retail sites over the 2025 holiday season.

[Adobe, 2026](#)

Now read the fine print

These are big numbers. They're also easy to misread. Salesforce's 20% includes personalized recommendations and conversational customer service, so it does **not** mean one in five orders started inside ChatGPT or Gemini. Adobe's conversion figure is an aggregate across retailers, and AI-referred visitors may simply arrive with stronger purchase intent. Neither number tells you how much incremental revenue *your* store will earn from AI discovery.

So what actually changes for a \$300K Shopify store? Less than the hype suggests, and more than most stores prepare for. AI shopping channels read the same product data, prices, stock levels, and policies your customers do. When those are wrong, the AI channel doesn't fix them. It repeats them, at scale.

An AI assistant can only recommend what your catalog can explain. And the shopper it sends can only buy what your checkout can deliver.

● EXPERT TAKE

Stores rarely lose BFCM inside the AI channel. They lose it at a discount code that fails on mobile, a size shown in stock that isn't, a returns page that contradicts the product page. Fix those leaks first. Visibility only amplifies what's already there, good or bad.

This playbook gives you a way to find your highest-priority readiness problems, check Shopify's AI shopping setup, improve the listings that matter, test your purchase journey, and measure whether the work produced commercially meaningful results. **The QeRetail Team**

CHOOSE YOUR STARTING POINT

Use this playbook the way your store actually runs

A \$150K store run by its founder and a \$450K store with a 3PL and an ERP feed don't have the same bottleneck. Pick the profile closest to yours. These are operating modes, not strict revenue cutoffs, so choose by constraint.

\$100K–\$200K
THE GROWTH STARTER

YOUR CONSTRAINT
The owner does almost everything, and time is the scarcest resource.

FOCUS ON
Your top 10–20 SKUs, checkout, discount codes, and stock on promoted variants.

ALL YOU NEED
One spreadsheet and one named owner per fix.

START WITH
Chapters 01, 04, 05 and the two-hour sprint (W8).

\$200K–\$400K
THE SCALING OPERATOR

YOUR CONSTRAINT
The catalog is growing faster than your data hygiene.

FOCUS ON
Standard attributes and variant naming, fixed in batches with a template rather than one-off edits.

ALL YOU NEED
Owners by function: merchandising, marketing, operations.

START WITH
Chapters 01, 03, 04 and 07.

\$400K–\$500K+
THE ENTERPRISE-READY BRAND

YOUR CONSTRAINT
Systems and approvals. Data passes through several tools before it reaches the shopper.

FOCUS ON
Inventory sync with your ERP or 3PL, shipping regions, reporting consistency, and change control.

ALL YOU NEED
A clear rule for who can approve a live change.

START WITH
Chapters 01, 05, 08 and 09.

Your route through the playbook

PART	WHAT YOU'LL DO	WHAT YOU'LL HAVE AT THE END
01 • Diagnose	Score six readiness areas and choose the 20 products that matter most.	A baseline and a ranked issue list
02 • Fix foundations	Check AI channels, product information, offers, inventory, and store trust.	Verified fixes, not cosmetic activity
03 • Test discovery	Run repeatable AI shopping queries and record what appears.	A discovery log you can trust
04 • Operate & learn	Run the dated six-week plan, monitor peak week, review after Cyber Monday.	A post-BFCM decision memo

You don't need every tool, every channel, or a store-wide catalog rewrite to make real progress. You need the right 20 products, an honest scorecard, and a retest habit.

THE SYSTEM IN ONE PAGE

Eight moves, one connected system

Each chapter feeds the next. A listing fix only counts once checkout works. A discovery test only means something once the listing is accurate. Treat these as one system, not eight separate projects.



The eight readiness moves covered in Chapters 02–08.

Four rules that run through every chapter

RULE 1

Fix what blocks a purchase before what improves visibility. A broken discount outranks a better description every time.

RULE 2

Verify with evidence, not confidence. "I think it works" is a 1 on the scorecard. "I tested it on Tuesday" is a 2.

RULE 3

Visibility isn't traffic, and traffic isn't profit. Measure each stage separately so you know which one moved.

RULE 4

Retest after every change. A promotion edited after testing is an untested promotion.

01

PART ONE

Diagnose

Find out where your store actually stands before you change anything. Otherwise you can't tell progress from activity.

"Score your current state, not how confident you feel."

CH 01 The six-area readiness scorecard

W1 Readiness scorecard worksheet

W2 Triage and the issue register

01 CHAPTER ONE

The six-area readiness scorecard

Before you rewrite a description or type a single AI shopping query, establish a baseline. The scorecard covers the six areas where BFCM orders are most often won or lost.



Score each area 0–2 for your top 20 products using Worksheet W1.

Step one: pick your 20 products

Don't audit the whole catalog. Start with the 20 products where an error or information gap would cost you the most. Build the list from three sources,

REVENUE DRIVERS

Your best sellers over the last 90 days and during last year's BFCM.

CAMPAIGN PRODUCTS

Anything in a planned BFCM offer, bundle, email, or paid ad.

KNOWN PROBLEMS

High return rates, repeated support questions, or past stock errors.

EXPERT TAKE

Your best sellers and your BFCM promo list are rarely the same list. A product you're about to discount and push to your whole email list deserves an audit even if it sold modestly last quarter.

WORKSHEET W1 READINESS SCORECARD

Score your store **honestly**

Circle one score per area. If you can't point to evidence, it isn't a 2.

AREA	CHECK THESE SIGNALS	RED FLAG	SCORE	EVIDENCE / NOTE
Product information	Titles, specifications, variants, images, availability	Shoppers can't tell whether the product fits their need	0 1 2	
Pricing & promotions	Sale prices, discount rules, exclusions, checkout totals	The advertised offer doesn't match what checkout charges	0 1 2	
Inventory & fulfillment	Variant stock, system sync, delivery commitments	You could oversell or promise a date you can't meet	0 1 2	
Store trust	Shipping, returns, contact details, genuine reviews	Key purchase questions go unanswered	0 1 2	
AI discovery	Channel eligibility, catalog data, discoverability	Eligible products have missing or poorly mapped data	0 1 2	
Measurement	Traffic, orders, conversion, margin, returns	You can't tell if an improvement mattered commercially	0 1 2	
Total score (out of 12)				

SCORE 0

Not checked, or known to be broken.

SCORE 1

Partly complete, inconsistent, or not retested since the last change.

SCORE 2

Verified with evidence: a test, a screenshot, a report, a date.

Read your total as a work plan

0-4 · STABILIZE

Several core areas are unknown or broken. Focus on checkout, price, stock, and delivery promises before anything else.

5-8 · CLOSE GAPS

Foundations exist, but inconsistent details may still block purchase confidence. Assign owners and retest the gaps.

9-12 · TEST CAREFULLY

Use the stronger baseline to test discovery and measurement. A high score still doesn't guarantee AI placement or sales.

These score bands are an internal triage convention for this playbook, not an industry benchmark. Rescore after Phase 2 of your timeline (Chapter 09) to see what moved.

01 TRIAGE

Fix the problems that **cost you sales first**

Your scorecard will surface more problems than you can fix before November 27. That's normal. Sort every issue into one of three buckets.

P1 · FIX IMMEDIATELY

Broken checkout, incorrect prices, failed discounts, inventory errors, misleading delivery promises.

P2 · FIX NEXT

Missing specifications, confusing variants, inaccurate images, incomplete policies, significant catalog-mapping issues.

P3 · TEST & IMPROVE

AI discovery opportunities, lower-impact listing improvements, and additional reporting.

Context still matters. A broken discount on your main campaign beats a cosmetic description fix on a slow seller. But a missing specification that keeps stopping shoppers from evaluating a high-value product may deserve more attention than a minor stock issue on an item with plenty of inventory. This is an operational method, not a statistical prediction of lost revenue.

The goal isn't to complete the most tasks. It's to remove the most consequential obstacles first.

WORKSHEET W2 ISSUE REGISTER

#	ISSUE & AFFECTED PRODUCTS	PRIORITY	BUSINESS IMPACT	EFFORT	OWNER	DUE	VERIFIED
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							

Priority: P1 / P2 / P3. Impact and effort: H / M / L. "Verified" means someone other than the person who made the fix has checked it, or the owner has retested it after a break.

02

PART TWO

Fix the foundations

Make sure every channel, AI or otherwise, sees accurate products, honest offers, real stock, and clear policies.

"Default on is not the same as configured correctly."

-
- CH 02 Check Shopify's AI shopping channels
 - CH 03 Improve your 20 most important listings
 - CH 04 Verify prices, discounts, and checkout
 - CH 05 Protect inventory and fulfillment
 - CH 06 Make policies and product info agree

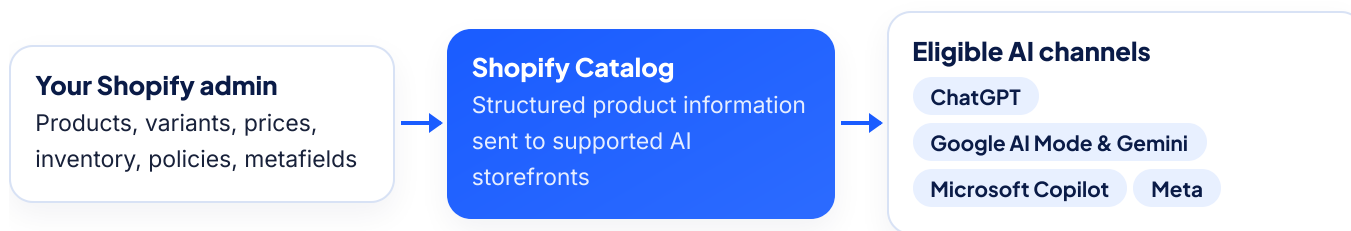
02 CHAPTER TWO

Check whether Shopify's AI channels can discover your products

AI shopping isn't a replacement for search, ads, or your online store. It's another route between a shopper and your catalog, and it reads the same product data you publish everywhere else.

Shopify's **Agentic Storefronts** support product discovery and purchasing through eligible AI channels, including ChatGPT, Google AI Mode and Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, and Meta. What each channel can do, and how a shopper buys, depends on the channel and on your store's eligibility. Eligible stores manage the setup in Shopify admin under **Sales channels** → **Agentic**.

How your catalog reaches AI shoppers



Discovery can also happen through web crawling, indexing, and other product feeds. Your storefront still matters.

WHAT "ELIGIBLE" MEANS

- Your products can be made available to a supported channel.
- The channel can read the catalog data you've provided.
- You can review previews, listing insights, and reporting where available.

WHAT IT DOESN'T MEAN

- A guaranteed recommendation, ranking, or sale.
- That every channel is active for your store.
- That every channel supports the same checkout experience.

EXPERT TAKE

Shopify enables Agentic Storefronts by default for eligible stores, which is exactly why so many merchants never check it. Default on is not the same as configured correctly. Open the admin, look at which channels can see your products, and write down what you find.

For setup details, see the [Shopify Agentic Storefronts documentation](#).

02 SETUP CHECK

Your five-minute setup check

Do this today. It takes five minutes and turns an assumption into a fact you can score.

- 1 Open Shopify admin and go to **Sales channels → Agentic**.
- 2 Review which channels are available and whether they have access to your products.
- 3 Check whether your 20 priority products are eligible and included in the relevant catalog.
- 4 Review the product-discovery preview and listing-quality insights, where available.
- 5 Check what performance reporting is available for your store and channels, and note it for Chapter 07.

Availability and settings vary by store. Record your actual configuration instead of assuming every channel is active or supports the same checkout.

If a priority product doesn't appear

Start with the basics. Each question below comes with the failure mode it usually hides,

- ☐ **Does it have a clear title and description?** *(If the title is an internal name like "The Aurora 2", there's nothing for a shopper's need to match against.)*
- ☐ **Is the price current?** *(A stale compare-at price is a trust problem in every channel, not only AI.)*
- ☐ **Are images and variants present?** *(A size that exists only in the description can't be selected or recommended.)*
- ☐ **Is inventory accurate?** *(A variant wrongly shown in stock turns a recommendation into a cancellation.)*
- ☐ **Are key attributes stored in fields Shopify Catalog can use?** *(Specs buried in an image or a PDF size chart are invisible to structured data.)*
- ☐ **Is the relevant channel enabled and eligible to display the product?** *(Each channel applies its own eligibility rules and terms.)*

FOR MORE COMPLEX CATALOGS

If you use metafields, metaobjects, custom product titles, or complex product-grouping logic, review Shopify's product discovery and catalog guidance before you change anything. These are the setups most likely to map data in unexpected ways.

Important: eligibility does not guarantee a recommendation, ranking, or sale. Each AI channel applies its own selection and presentation logic. Fix catalog issues because accurate information helps customers and supported channels, not because any ranking is promised.

MEASURE PROGRESS Record **how many of your 20 priority products** are eligible and included today, and recheck after each round of fixes.

03 CHAPTER THREE

Improve your 20 most important product listings

A catalog with hundreds or thousands of products can't be fully audited before BFCM. It doesn't need to be. Start where an error or information gap would matter most.



For each priority product, review

- ☐ Product title and category
- ☐ Material, dimensions, weight, or other key specs
- ☐ Available sizes, colors, and variants
- ☐ Compatibility, intended use, and limitations
- ☐ Accurate images and descriptive alt text
- ☐ Current price and inventory availability
- ☐ Relevant shipping and purchase information

Use the right lens for your category

APPAREL

Fabric composition, fit, sizing guidance, care, color accuracy.

ELECTRONICS

Compatibility, dimensions, ports, capacity, power, what's in the box.

HOME & LIFESTYLE

Measurements, materials, weight limits, finish, care, assembly.

03 LISTING QUALITY

Specific beats superlative

"Best quality" and "perfect for everyone" answer no question a shopper actually asks. Facts do.

Descriptions

BEFORE

"Premium-quality laptop bag with a stylish design."

AFTER

"Waxed-cotton laptop bag with a padded compartment for laptops up to 16 inches and an adjustable shoulder strap."

Titles

BEFORE

"Aurora Jacket, Blue"

AFTER

"Aurora Waterproof Hiking Jacket, Men's, Navy"

Variant names

BEFORE

"Option 1 / Option 2 / Option 3"

AFTER

"Size: M · Color: Navy · Length: Regular"

Examples are illustrative. Publish a specification only if it is accurate; a confident wrong spec is worse than a missing one.

Use Shopify's listing insights, carefully

Agentic Storefronts tools can show listing-quality indicators covering description completeness, image coverage, product reviews, variants, and policies. Use them to find specific gaps, not as a guarantee of ranking or revenue. A complete listing may be easier to match to relevant queries, but relevance, popularity, engagement, and brand recognition also shape what gets shown.

EXPERT TAKE

Adjective-heavy copy was always weak. In AI-assisted shopping it's close to useless, because the shopper's question is usually a constraint: "fits a 16-inch laptop", "machine washable", "under \$150". If the answer isn't written down in a field, you're asking the system to guess. Don't make it guess about your best sellers.

SMALL TEAM TIP

Write one attribute template per category and fill it product by product. It's faster than freehand rewriting and keeps variants consistent.

LARGER CATALOG TIP

Fix gaps in batches by attribute (all missing dimensions, then all missing materials) so one owner can check a whole column at once.

MEASURE PROGRESS

Count priority products with **complete, accurate information** before and after your audit. Track missing fields separately from traffic or sales.

WORKSHEET W3 20-PRODUCT CLEANUP

The 20-product cleanup sheet

One row per priority product. Mark gaps with a code, then log any P1 or P2 fix in your issue register (W2).

Gap codes: T = title/category · S = specs · V = variants · I = imagery · P = price · A = availability · X = other

#	PRODUCT / SKU	WHY IT MATTERS	GAP CODES	NEXT ACTION	OWNER	DONE
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						

DEFINITION OF DONE

- ☐ Required fields are complete and fact-checked.
- ☐ Variants, price, and availability match the page and your operational source.
- ☐ A second person can verify what changed.

TRACK TWO OUTCOMES, SEPARATELY

(1) Fields and gaps corrected. (2) Whether qualified traffic, conversion, or customer questions change afterward. Better data is an operational improvement, not proof of extra revenue on its own.

04 CHAPTER FOUR

Verify your prices, discounts, and checkout

A BFCM click is the most expensive click of your year. Losing it to a discount code that doesn't work is the most avoidable loss of the season.

Picture it. A shopper sees a product advertised at \$49, adds it to the cart, and finds that the code doesn't apply. Maybe there's a legitimate exclusion. It doesn't matter. Unclear conditions create doubt, and doubt at checkout becomes an abandoned cart.

Test the complete promotional journey

For each major BFCM promotion,

- 1 Confirm the original price and the current selling price.
- 2 Check compare-at pricing and how the discount is displayed.
- 3 Test automatic discounts and discount codes, including stacking behavior.
- 4 Verify eligibility rules, exclusions, and minimum-spend requirements.
- 5 Check shipping thresholds, delivery estimates, and applicable charges.
- 6 Test the final checkout amount on **mobile and desktop**.
- 7 Confirm the promotion works for the intended products and customer segments.

Use representative test orders and shipping destinations wherever they change the experience. Shopify Catalog can pass pricing to supported AI channels, but presentation may differ by channel, so check how your prices and promotions actually appear.

A test passes only when

PRICE

The visible price and final order total match the advertised conditions.

ELIGIBILITY

The right items and customers qualify, and exclusions are clear before checkout.

FULFILLMENT

Shipping, delivery, and available stock match what the customer was promised.

EXPERT TAKE

"QA done" in a Slack message isn't a test. A test has a scenario, an expected result, an actual result, and a retest date. And if anyone edits the promotion after you've tested it, the test no longer counts. A last-minute change nobody retested is the classic way a working checkout breaks in peak week.

MEASURE PROGRESS Track pricing and checkout issues **identified, resolved, and successfully retested**. Only the third number counts as ready.

WORKSHEET W4 CHECKOUT TEST MATRIX

A test matrix, not a vague "QA complete"

Run every scenario for each major promotion. Capture at least one end-to-end test from the intended entry point (ad, email, AI channel) through order confirmation.

SCENARIO	DEVICE / CONTEXT	EXPECTED RESULT	ACTUAL RESULT	PASS
Full-price order	Mobile + desktop	Correct price and shipping total; checkout completes.		☐
Automatic discount	Eligible promoted SKU	Discount applies once and is shown clearly.		☐
Code + exclusion	Excluded product / minimum spend	Rules behave exactly as the campaign terms say.		☐
Free-shipping threshold	Just below and just above	Threshold and shipping charge are accurate.		☐
Low-stock variant	Specific size / color / model	Availability matches operational stock.		☐
Remote destination	Where shipping costs differ	Rate and delivery estimate are realistic.		☐
Return / refund info	Product page + policy page	Terms are consistent and easy to find.		☐
Confirmation & service	Order email + support inbox	Customer gets the expected next-step information.		☐

Defect log: keep it open until every line is closed

#	DEFECT	SEVERITY	OWNER	FIXED ON	RETEST DATE	RESULT
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

Retest rule: if the promotion, theme, or a checkout app changes after testing, rerun the affected scenarios. A change after the test makes the test void.

05 CHAPTER FIVE

Protect inventory and fulfillment capacity

A product can be discoverable, well priced, and ready to sell, and still cost you money if you take orders you can't fulfill. Promotions turn small stock errors into big ones.

Your inventory and delivery audit

- ☐ Verify stock by size, color, or other variant
- ☐ Check sync between Shopify and external systems
- ☐ Review "Continue selling when out of stock"
- ☐ Confirm preorder and backorder rules
- ☐ Check fulfillment capacity against promotions
- ☐ Publish realistic holiday delivery cutoffs
- ☐ Name one owner for stock issues and delays

ON BACKORDERS

Don't disable backorders across the board. If you accept them on purpose, make the terms and expected fulfillment timing clear before checkout.

ON DELIVERY PROMISES

Don't promise delivery by a specific date unless your carriers and your order-processing capacity can support it on your busiest day.

Promoted-variant stock check

#	PROMOTED VARIANT	SHOPIFY STOCK	WAREHOUSE / 3PL	MATCH?	EXPECTED PROMO DEMAND / ACTION
1					
2					
3					
4					

EXPERT TAKE

Overselling a hero variant costs far more than one lost order. You pay for the click, process the refund, absorb the support time, and end up with a customer who no longer trusts your stock numbers. For stores with a 3PL or ERP, test the sync under load: place several orders on a low-stock variant and confirm both systems agree.

MEASURE PROGRESS

Track **overselling incidents**, cancellations caused by inventory errors, fulfillment delays, and delivery complaints. They show operational readiness, not just a complete-looking catalog.

06 CHAPTER SIX

Make store policies and product information agree

Customers need to know what they're buying, when it will arrive, and what happens if something goes wrong. Policies should be easy to find and match how you actually operate.

Your policy audit should answer

- ☐ **How long do customers have to request a return?** *(If holiday orders get an extended window, say so on the product page too.)*
- ☐ **Which products qualify for returns or refunds?** *(Final-sale BFCM items need that label before checkout, not after.)*
- ☐ **Who pays return shipping, and what condition must items be in?** *(Ambiguity here is a fast route to a dispute.)*
- ☐ **How can customers contact your business?**
- ☐ **What are your holiday processing and shipping cutoffs?**

Run the three-place contradiction check

PRODUCT PAGE

Variant info, shipping notes, return eligibility.

POLICY PAGES

Shipping, returns, refunds, contact.

CHECKOUT & EMAILS

Delivery estimate, order confirmation, terms.

If any two disagree, the customer will believe the one that suits them, and your support team pays for it. Shopify's listing insights include store-policy completeness as one signal: useful diagnostics, not a promise of better rankings.

Keep reviews genuine

DO

Use your normal post-purchase flow to invite honest feedback. The most useful reviews explain sizing, fit, durability, compatibility, or ease of use.

DON'T

Script reviews, pressure customers for positive ratings, or present unverified claims as customer experiences.

● EXPERT TAKE

Nobody reads your returns page when they're calm. They read it when they're anxious about a gift arriving on time. Write it for that version of your customer: plain numbers, plain dates, and a clear answer to "who pays?"

MEASURE PROGRESS

Track **recurring policy questions**, common return reasons, and complaints about inaccurate product information.

03

PART THREE

Test discovery

See how your products show up for real shopping questions, without confusing visibility with sales.

"One AI answer is an anecdote. Ten answers over three weeks is a pattern."

CH 07 Test AI product discovery

W5 AI discovery log

LADDER Separate the measurement stages

07 CHAPTER SEVEN

Test AI discovery without confusing visibility with sales

Only start here once your P1 catalog and operational problems are fixed. Testing discovery on a listing with the wrong price just tells you the wrong price is visible.

Begin with Shopify's Agentic Storefronts **discovery preview**, where available. It helps you examine product relevance within Shopify Catalog and review listing insights. But treat it as a directional signal: AI channels may reorder or present products differently in the customer-facing experience.

Build a test set of 10 real shopping questions

Write queries the way customers actually ask. The most useful ones combine a need, a constraint, and an attribute,

QUERY TYPE	EXAMPLE (OUTDOOR CLOTHING STORE)	WHAT IT TESTS
Need + price	"Find a waterproof hiking jacket under \$150"	Price data and a core attribute
Use case	"Recommend a lightweight jacket for wet-weather commuting"	Whether your copy explains intended use
Availability	"Find a hiking jacket available in size medium"	Variant and inventory data
Comparison	"Compare jackets suitable for cold-weather layering"	Specs that let a system compare products
Feature-specific	"Find a jacket with taped seams and zip pockets"	Whether features live in structured fields

Replace these with queries for your own products. Don't test needs or requirements your store doesn't actually serve.

Run the same queries the same way, every time

Run your set across the channels you care about and record six things in W5: date and platform, the exact query, relevant products shown, whether your store appeared, key competitors shown, and changes you've made since the last test. Repeat at least weekly until BFCM and after every significant listing change.

● EXPERT TAKE

This is where stores burn their last pre-BFCM weeks. A single AI response changes, someone panics, and the copy gets rewritten again. One answer is an anecdote; ten answers over three weeks is a pattern. And even when your product appears, that doesn't prove the response sent a visitor or caused a sale. Change listings for accuracy, then let the log tell you what's real.

WORKSHEET W5 AI DISCOVERY LOG

Your AI discovery log

Keep the query wording identical between runs. Changing the question changes the answer.

#	DATE	CHANNEL	EXACT QUERY	WE APPEARED?	COMPETITORS SHOWN	CHANGES SINCE LAST TEST
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						

GOOD SIGN

Your product appears for the same query across several runs and channels.

INVESTIGATE

You appear in the preview but rarely in customer-facing answers.

DON'T OVERREACT

One run changed. Wait for the next scheduled test before editing.

07 MEASUREMENT

The measurement ladder: **separate the stages**

Every rung answers a different question. Climbing one rung doesn't prove the next one moved. Track them separately so you know exactly where the value is, or isn't.

STAGE	WHAT IT TELLS YOU	WHAT IT DOESN'T PROVE
1 Catalog completeness	Important product information is present and accurate.	That anyone will see it.
2 Discovery–preview results	Products look relevant to tested catalog queries.	How customer-facing channels will rank them.
3 AI-referred sessions	Identifiable AI sources are sending visitors.	That those visitors would not have come anyway.
4 Attributed orders	Orders are associated with identifiable AI channels or referrers.	That AI caused the purchase.
5 Conversion rate	What share of measured sessions turn into purchases.	Incremental sales; intent may already be high.
6 Contribution margin	Whether revenue remains after variable costs.	Long-term customer value.
7 Returns & cancellations	Whether those orders created operational problems.	Nothing on its own; read it with rung 6.

Shopify provides Agentic Storefronts performance reporting for supported setups, including sales, orders, sessions, and conversion measures where available. Reporting availability varies, so check what your store can actually see.

Attribution caution: a higher conversion rate from AI referrals doesn't prove AI created extra sales. AI-referred visitors may already have stronger purchase intent, and some AI-assisted journeys end in a purchase credited to another channel.

The question isn't whether AI can show your product. It's whether that activity turns into profitable orders.

04

PART FOUR

Operate & learn

Rank the work, run a dated plan, hold steady through peak week, then turn what happened into better decisions for next time.

"A promotion edited after testing is an untested promotion."

CH 08 Rank the work by impact and effort

CH 09 Your dated six-week BFCM timeline

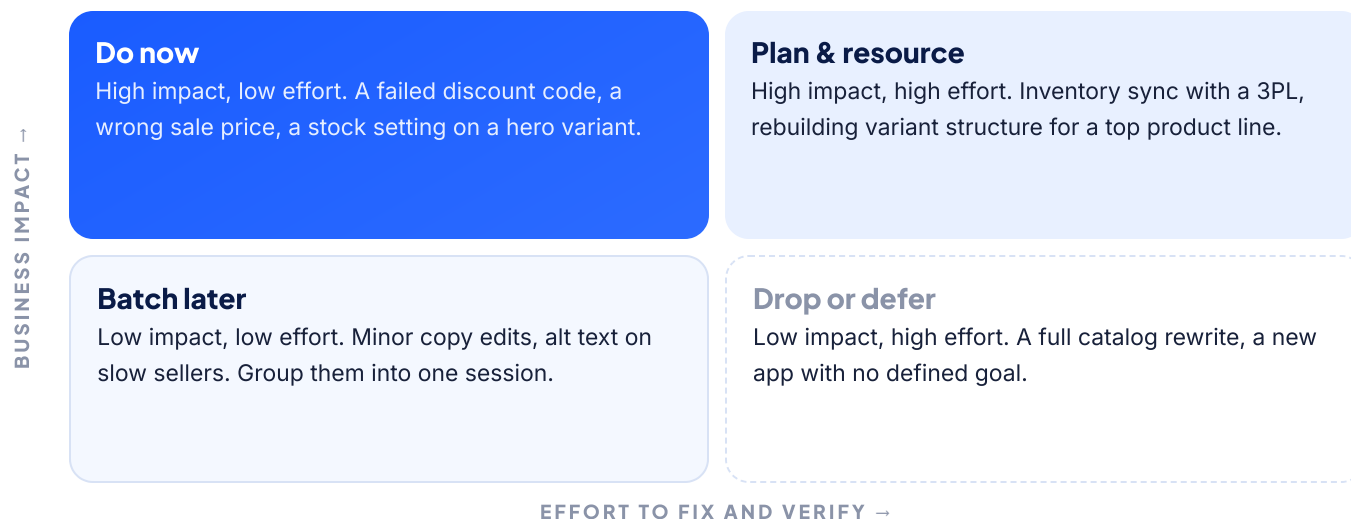
CH 10 Turn the results into better decisions

W8 The two-hour sprint

08 CHAPTER EIGHT

Decide what deserves attention: impact versus effort

The fastest way to waste preparation time is to treat every catalog issue as equally important. Plot each issue from your register (W2) on this grid.



Example issues, ranked

EXAMPLE ISSUE	BUSINESS RISK	SUGGESTED PRIORITY
Major BFCM discount fails at checkout	Directly undermines the promotion	IMMEDIATE
Popular variant wrongly shown as available	Cancellations and dissatisfaction	IMMEDIATE
High-value product lacks a critical spec	Suitability is harder to assess	HIGH
Return policy contradicts actual practice	Confusion and potential disputes	HIGH
Low-selling product has a minor copy issue	Lower immediate impact	LOWER
AI discovery result changed once	May be normal variation	INVESTIGATE FIRST

SMALLER TEAMS

A spreadsheet with four fields is enough: issue and affected products, potential impact, effort to fix and verify, owner and deadline.

LARGER TEAMS

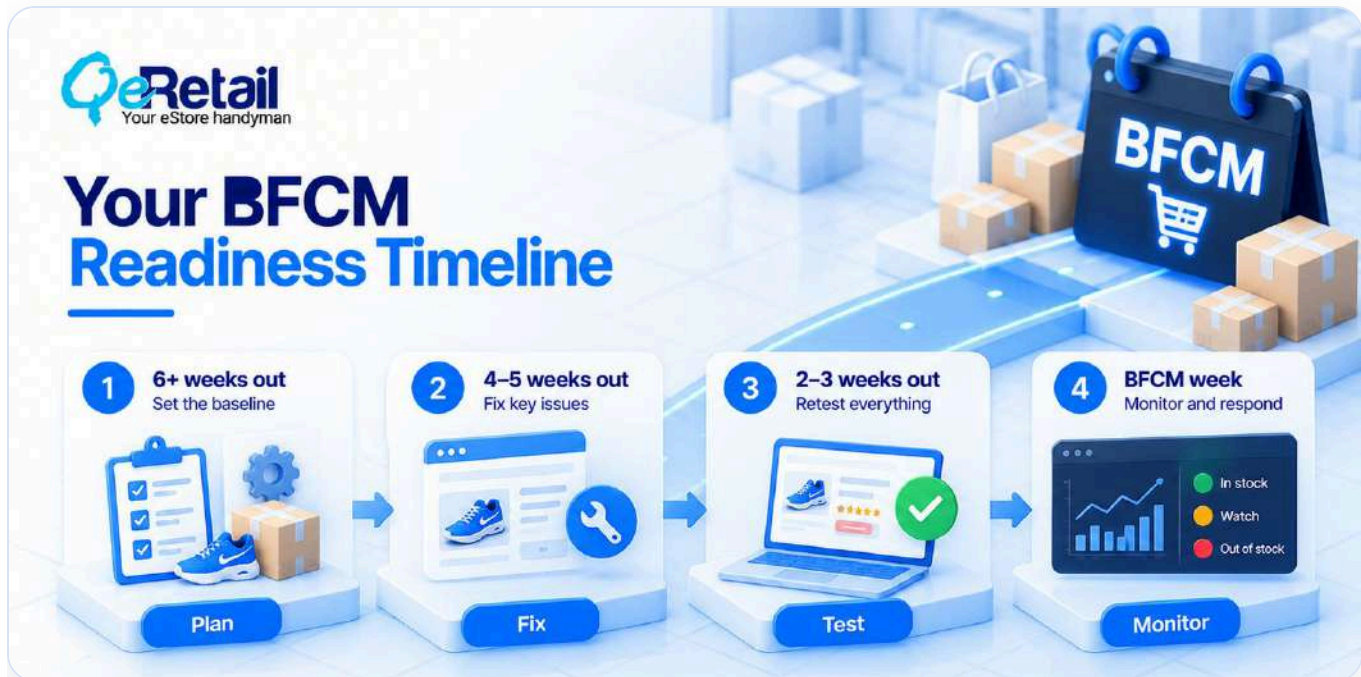
Assign by function: merchandising owns product info, marketing owns promotions, operations owns inventory and fulfillment, store management owns reporting and priorities.

This is a decision aid, not a universal ranking. The right priority depends on your products, margins, traffic, capacity, and the consequences of each issue.

09 CHAPTER NINE

Your dated six-week BFCM timeline

With Black Friday on November 27, 2026, every phase below has a real calendar window. Put these dates in your calendar today, with an owner next to each one.



PHASE 1 · 6+ WEEKS OUT

Oct 12–23

Set the baseline

- ☐ Identify priority products and promotions
- ☐ Review catalog quality and Agentic Storefronts settings
- ☐ Check inventory, fulfillment capacity, policies
- ☐ Record the most important problems (W1, W2)
- ☐ Assign owners and deadlines

Deliverable: a prioritized readiness plan.

PHASE 2 · 4–5 WEEKS OUT

Oct 23–Nov 6

Fix the highest-impact issues

- ☐ Correct incomplete product information (W3)
- ☐ Resolve pricing and discount inconsistencies
- ☐ Review inventory sync and backorder rules
- ☐ Clarify shipping and return policies
- ☐ Address significant checkout problems

Deliverable: resolved issues, plus a list of remaining risks.

09 TIMELINE, CONTINUED

Test, freeze, then monitor

The last three weeks are about proving things work and then leaving them alone.

PHASE 3 · 2–3 WEEKS OUT
Nov 6–20

Test and verify

- ☐ Retest major promotional journeys (W4)
- ☐ Confirm fulfillment expectations and roles
- ☐ Verify priority variants and stock
- ☐ Verify that fixes work as intended
- ☐ Review discovery previews and AI queries (W5)

Deliverable: a tested purchase journey and a plan for unresolved issues.

PHASE 4 · PEAK
Nov 20–Dec 1

Monitor and respond

- ☐ Check inventory and fulfillment capacity daily
- ☐ Review available channel reporting
- ☐ Monitor discount and checkout problems
- ☐ Track complaints and cancellations
- ☐ Avoid untested changes

Deliverable: a record of issues, channel performance, and opportunities for next time.

SET A CHANGE FREEZE

Pick a date, ideally around **November 20**, after which no theme, app, or promotion changes go live without a retest. Write down who can approve an emergency fix.

STARTING LATE?

Don't attempt everything. Fix critical **checkout, pricing, and inventory** problems first, then the most important product-data gaps. Use W8, the two-hour sprint.

WORKSHEET W6 PEAK-WEEK COMMAND LOG

#	DATE / TIME	WHAT HAPPENED	AREA	OWNER	ACTION TAKEN	RESOLVED?
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

Area: checkout · pricing · stock · fulfillment · support · channel. Review this log in your post-BFCM memo (W7).

10 CHAPTER TEN

Turn the results into better decisions

After Cyber Monday, judge the campaign by what it earned, not by impressions or AI visibility alone. Block 90 minutes in the first week of December, while the details are fresh.

Ask these seven questions

- 1 Which products attracted relevant traffic?
- 2 Which product-information gaps did we fix?
- 3 Which products appeared in discovery tests?
- 4 Which channels sent identifiable sessions and orders?
- 5 Were those orders profitable after variable costs?
- 6 Did cancellations, returns, or fulfillment issues offset the gains?
- 7 Which improvements come first next campaign?

READ THE RESULTS FAIRLY

Compare with relevant channels and previous periods. Account for seasonality, promotion depth, traffic volume, and attribution limits.

If AI-related traffic was small or attribution was unclear, your catalog work wasn't wasted. Accurate data, clear offers, and reliable operations pay off across search, ads, and direct visits too.

It does mean you should hold off on increasing spend or promising an AI-driven uplift without stronger evidence.

WORKSHEET W7 POST-BFCM DECISION MEMO

METRIC	BFCM 2025	BFCM 2026	WHAT CHANGED, AND WHY WE THINK SO
Sessions / orders			
Conversion rate · AOV			
Contribution margin			
Returns · cancellations			
AI-referred sessions · orders			

KEEP DOING

FIX BEFORE NEXT PEAK

STOP DOING

TEST NEXT

WORKSHEET W8 FIELD WORKSHEET

If you have only **two hours**

The minimum viable readiness sprint for a small team starting late. Set a timer and work straight down the list.

TIME	DO THIS	OUTPUT
0–15 min	Select 10–20 priority products and the offers you'll actually run.	The short list
15–40 min	Test checkout, codes, discount exclusions, and shipping totals on mobile.	Critical defects logged
40–60 min	Verify stock on promoted variants and review delivery promises.	Stock and fulfillment risks
60–85 min	Fix the most important missing product facts or confusing variants.	High-value listing fixes
85–100 min	Check returns, refund, shipping, and contact details against real operations.	Policy gaps assigned
100–115 min	Open Sales channels → Agentic; confirm channels and priority product status.	Current setup recorded
115–120 min	Assign owners and deadlines; schedule retests.	Action list

Don't spend these two hours chasing an unverified AI ranking, rewriting every description, swapping apps without a clear need, or polishing low-selling SKUs while checkout and stock issues remain.

My next five actions

#	ACTION	OWNER	DUE DATE	PROOF IT'S DONE
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

SAFE TO LEAVE FOR LATER

- A full catalog rewrite while your top products still have gaps.
- A new app or channel with no defined goal or owner.
- Repeatedly changing copy to chase unstable AI responses.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Questions merchants ask **before BFCM**

Did AI influence 20% of orders during Cyber Week 2025?

Salesforce reported AI and agents influenced 20% of global Cyber Week orders, tied to \$67B in sales. Its definition includes personalized recommendations and conversational service. It doesn't mean 20% of orders started in ChatGPT or Gemini.

Do AI-referred shoppers convert better?

Adobe reported AI-referred retail visits converted 31% better than other traffic during the 2025 holiday season. That's an aggregate result, not a guaranteed outcome for your store. Measure your own where attribution is reliable.

Can I use AI shopping channels without buying another tool?

Eligible merchants can manage Agentic Storefronts directly in Shopify. Availability, eligibility, and checkout capabilities vary by store and channel, so check your admin and the channel terms first.

Does complete product information guarantee AI recommendations?

No. Accurate, structured information helps systems understand suitability, but it doesn't guarantee eligibility, a recommendation, ranking, or sales. Each channel makes its own selection decisions.

How much time does a small team need for this?

Plan for a few focused hours a week across the six-week timeline, plus the two-hour sprint if you're starting late. Limiting the work to 20 products and one named owner per fix is what keeps it manageable.

Should I increase my AI marketing budget before BFCM?

Not just because AI shopping is growing. Review channel availability, fix significant catalog and operational issues, and measure identifiable traffic and orders. Invest further when you have a clear objective and credible evidence.

How do I check whether AI tools can discover my products?

Review your Agentic Storefronts settings and discovery preview where available, then run a fixed set of 10 real shopping queries and log the results (W5). Treat them as directional evidence, not proof of traffic.

What should a small Shopify team fix first?

Broken checkout flows, incorrect promotional prices, inventory errors, and misleading delivery promises. Then the most commercially important listings and major policy gaps. The two-hour sprint (W8) covers the essentials.

What should I measure after BFCM?

Identifiable traffic, attributed orders, conversion, AOV, contribution margin, returns, and cancellations. Compare like-for-like periods and account for attribution limits before deciding a change caused an improvement.

Is it too late to start in November?

No, but narrow the scope. Run the two-hour sprint (W8), fix P1 issues only, and set a change freeze around November 20. A short list that's fully retested beats a long list that's half done.

THE DECISION IN FRONT OF YOU

Stop chasing AI rankings. Start removing what stops a sale.

BFCM preparation isn't about adopting every new technology or finishing every possible optimization. It's about finding the problems most likely to block discovery, confidence, checkout, and fulfillment, and fixing them before demand peaks.

For some stores, the biggest opportunity is product data. For others, it's discount logic, inventory accuracy, or unclear shipping policies. AI discovery is worth investigating, alongside the fundamentals, never instead of them.

If your listings look polished but a promo code still fails on mobile, you didn't get BFCM-ready. You just got busy. The stores that win this season will be the ones that verified the boring things and measured the results honestly.

FREE FOR SHOPIFY MERCHANTS

Book your free Shopify Product-Readiness Audit

Not sure which of your gaps matters most? QeRetail can help you identify and prioritize product-readiness gaps before Black Friday. Your review gives you a clearer picture of,

- **What's incomplete** across your most important products and offers
- **What needs attention first**, ranked by business risk
- **What to do next**, as a practical action list your team can own

No promise that AI will recommend your products or increase revenue. Just an honest, prioritized view of your store.

Book your free audit → qeretail.com/contact-us



About QeRetail. QeRetail is a Shopify and eCommerce services company that works with growing store owners on what stands between a visitor and a profitable order: product data, offers, checkout, operations, and AI shopping readiness.

qeretail.com/contact-us

Sources

1. Salesforce, "AI and Agents Propel Cyber Week to Record \$336.6B in Global Spend," December 5, 2025. [Read the report](#)
2. Adobe, AI-driven traffic and conversion analysis, 2025 holiday season. [Read the analysis](#)
3. Shopify Help Center, "Agentic storefronts" (availability, channels, products, and agentic home). [Open Shopify guidance](#) · [Products](#) · [Agentic home](#)

Statistics are third-party aggregate figures cited as published. Re-check Shopify's live documentation before each campaign; channels, eligibility, and terms can change.



**Prioritize the fixes that matter.
Verify what changes.
Measure what the work delivers.**

QeRetail helps Shopify store owners fix what stops a sale, from product data and checkout to inventory and AI shopping readiness.

qeretail.com/contact-us