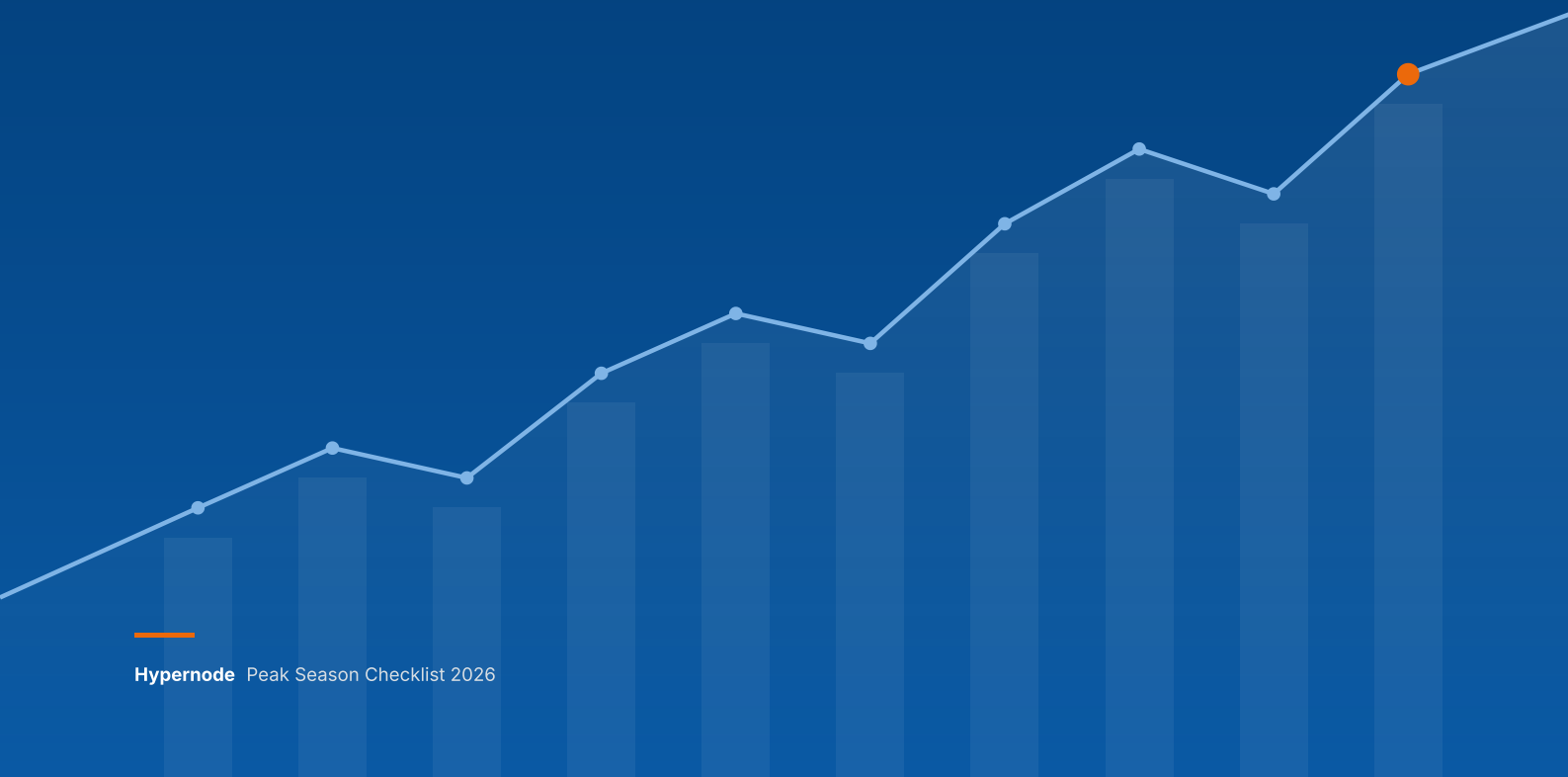
HYPERNODE®

The hosting platform for high-performing webshops

PEAK SEASON CHECKLIST 2026

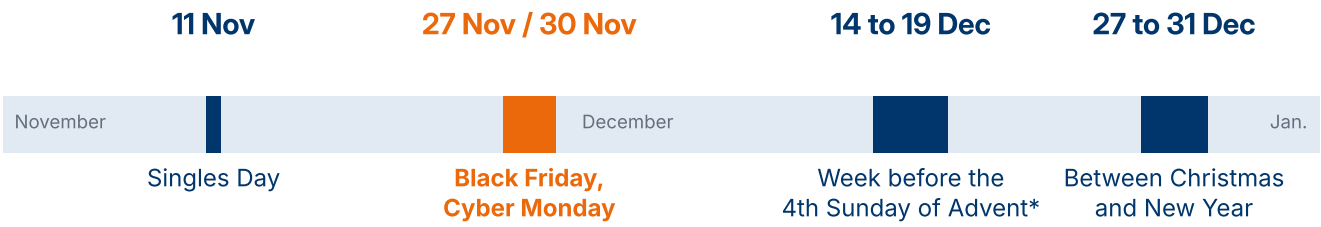
Get your webshop ready for Black Friday and the Christmas rush. One box at a time.



Black Friday gets all the attention. But peak season 2026 brings several traffic peaks between Singles Day and New Year, not just one.

The pages that matter most? The dynamic ones. Basket, login, checkout. This checklist walks you through prep, the campaign period and the clean-up after, in that order. Tick as you go. (Yes, the boxes actually work.)

Key Dates 2026



* Traditionally the highest-revenue period of the Christmas season in Germany, according to German retail federation HDE. Not a forecast for 2026. (Source [1]: HDE, 2025)

Three Numbers Worth Planning Around

+51%

higher online spending in Germany during Black Friday weeks 2025 than in the rest of the year.

> **Plan resources and monitoring for weeks, not a single day.**

Source [2]: YouGov, 2026

73%

of online shoppers in Germany buy on their smartphone, and 54% say payment options are very important.

> **Test your mobile checkout with every payment method. Yes, even that one.**

Source [3]: Bitkom, 2025

51%

of potential Black Friday shoppers in Germany want AI to help them shop in 2026.

> **Keep product data, prices and stock levels consistent across your shop and feeds.**

Source [2]: YouGov, 2026

01 Planning and Analysis

5 tasks

Now. Like, now.

- [ ] **Analyse your 2025 peak loads:** visitors and page views per minute, orders per hour.
- [ ] **Break down last year's conversion rate, basket abandonment and technical issues** by device and campaign.
- [ ] **Lock in your campaign calendar** up to early January. Promo days, start and end times, newsletter sends, ad launches.
- [ ] **Estimate your 2026 peak load** from last year's data and this year's campaigns.
- [ ] **Check stock for promoted products**, and decide what happens when something sells out. Because something will.

02 Prepare Your Tech and Hosting

11 tasks

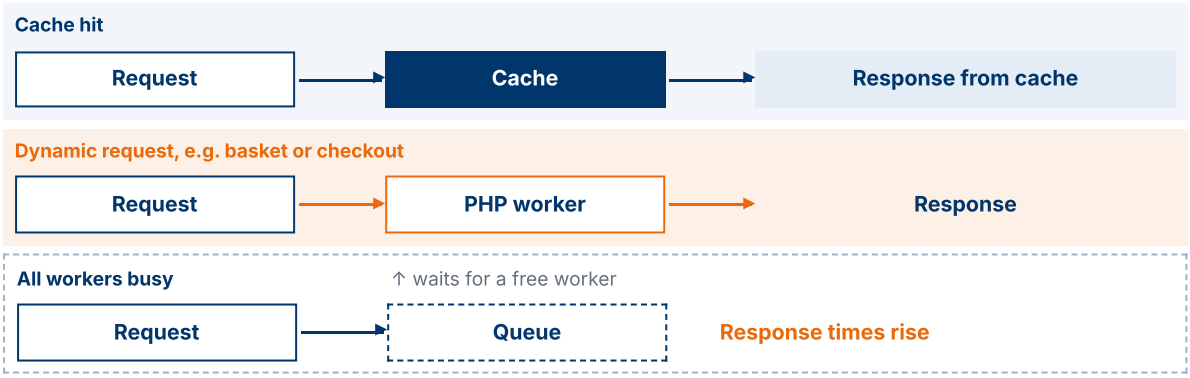
By mid-November

Resources and Caching

- [ ] **Share your campaign calendar and expected peak load** with your hosting partner. Agree on extra resources and when they go live.
- [ ] **Match your PHP workers** to the dynamic requests you expect and the memory you have.
- [ ] **Check your cache hit rate**, and find the processes that wipe large parts of it. Think price imports or reindexing.
- [ ] **Move heavy cron jobs, imports and feed exports** out of peak hours.
- [ ] **Test external services** like payments, ERP and shipping. Measure response times, then set timeouts and error handling.

> **Pro tip:** Dynamic requests like the basket and checkout usually need a PHP worker. When every worker is busy, requests start to queue. Even if your CPU still has capacity to spare.

How PHP Worker Queues Build Up Schematic



Which requests are served from cache depends on your shop platform and cache configuration.

Load Testing and Monitoring

- [ ] **Define your load test scenarios** with a realistic share of basket and checkout traffic, and set target values.
- [ ] **Run the load test** with your hosting partner. Fix the bottlenecks. Run it again.
- [ ] **Set up monitoring** for response times, error rate, PHP worker usage and orders. Then check the alerts actually fire.
- [ ] **Set up Application Performance Monitoring (APM)** to catch slow database queries and external calls.

> **Pro tip:** A load test that only hits your homepage and category pages is mostly testing your cache. Add the basket and checkout, and the results start to mean something. You can simulate the payment step.

02 Prepare Your Tech and Hosting

Continued

The Customer Journey in a Load Test Schematic



What gets cached depends on your shop platform.

Stability

- [ ] **Agree a code freeze** for anything non-essential. Security updates and urgent fixes are the only exceptions.
- [ ] **Check your backups** and test a restore. A backup you've never restored is really just a hopeful file.

03 Offers, Checkout and Product Data

6 tasks

- [ ] **Check reference and strikethrough prices**, and test your promo and voucher rules.
- [ ] **Match your payment methods** to what your shoppers actually prefer.
- [ ] **Show shipping costs and delivery times** before the final checkout step. No nasty surprises.
- [ ] **Test the whole purchase journey by hand** on smartphone and desktop. Include vouchers, a failed payment and the handover to your ERP.
- [ ] **Align product data, prices and availability** across your shop, feeds and structured data (schema.org).
- [ ] **Build campaign pages in advance**, and check them on a phone.

04 Organisation and Plan B

4 tasks

- [ ] **Name a technical contact and a backup** for every promo day, weekend and bank holiday.
- [ ] **Agree who signs off** on extra resources (and the budget for them) and on pausing campaigns.
- [ ] **Write down your escalation paths** and hosting support contact details. Somewhere everyone can find them.
- [ ] **Document your recovery process:** who triggers a rollback, and how long it takes.

05 Campaign Period, Up to Cyber Monday

5 tasks

From mid-November

- [ ] **Get your extra resources live and checked** before the first big promo day.
- [ ] **Load price changes before campaigns go live**, and warm the cache for your key campaign pages.
- [ ] **Send newsletters in waves** if your load test showed bottlenecks.
- [ ] **Keep a close eye on response times, error rate and orders** during and after every campaign launch.
- [ ] **Adjust resources between Black Friday and Cyber Monday** based on what your monitoring tells you.

> **Pro tip:** Price imports at the start of a promotion can wipe large parts of your cache. Worst case? Right as your newsletter lands. Schedule imports well ahead, and agree cache warming with your hosting partner.

06 December and the Run-Up to New Year

5 tasks

December

- [ ] **Agree resources for 14 to 19 December** with your hosting partner.
- [ ] **Show your last order date** for Christmas delivery in your shop and newsletter.
- [ ] **Test gift cards:** buying them up to Christmas Eve, and redeeming them after.
- [ ] **Get your returns and exchanges process ready** for higher volumes. They're coming.
- [ ] **Share an on-call rota** for 24 December to 1 January with everyone involved.

07 Scale Back and Review

January

4 tasks

- [ ] **Scale back capacity you no longer need** with your hosting partner, on an agreed date.
- [ ] **Lift the code freeze** and schedule the updates you postponed.
- [ ] **Review peak load, response times and bottlenecks**, and compare them with your load test results.
- [ ] **Document your campaign results and learnings** for peak season 2027. Future you will be grateful.

Resources Across the Season

Schematic



Schematic only, no measured values.

HYPERNODE®

SHAMELESS PLUG

Peak Season with Hypernode

Every Hypernode comes primed for traffic spikes. **Varnish and Redis** are built in, and Smart Request Handling stops requests you don't need before they reach your application.

- **Horizontal Autoscaling** adds whole server instances when CPU load crosses your threshold.
- **Vertical Autoscaling** moves you up a plan, then reverts within 24 hours once the rush is over.
- **HN Insights** shows live metrics and flags overloaded queues and bottlenecks as they appear.

Is Your Hosting Ready for Peak Season?

You've made it to the end of the checklist. Now see how Hypernode helps turn Black Friday spikes into Black Friday sales.

Get ready for Black Friday

hypernode.com/en/black-friday-2026

Sources

1. **HDE (2025):** *Weihnachtsgeschäft weiterhin verhalten, doch bevorstehende umsatzstärkste Zeit lässt auf Schwung hoffen.* German-language press release dated 14 December 2025 on the week before the third Sunday of Advent, with an outlook on the week before the fourth. Published by Handelsverband Bayern. View press release
2. **YouGov (2026):** *Black Friday 2026: Jeder zweite Kaufinteressierte will KI für die Schnäppchenjagd nutzen.* German-language article dated 15 October 2026. Basis for +51% (YouGov Shopper Panel Nonfood Germany 2025) and 51% (survey, July and August 2026). View article
3. **Bitkom (2025):** *Wie digital shoppt Deutschland?* German-language presentation dated 24 November 2025. Online shoppers aged 16 and over (n = 1,072). View presentation (PDF)