

# How Black Friday Will Affect the Supply Chain (What to Expect & What to Do)

Over the past year and a half, it's likely a safe bet that you've found yourself hurriedly headed to the store to stock up on essential items only to be confronted with empty shelves. While the panic buying of others (throwback to toilet paper shortages) may have seemingly contributed to your unsuccessful shop, the real issue is rooted much deeper. An ongoing pandemic has rendered our supply chain unreliable at best. While online orders have skyrocketed, [many factories have been forced to temporarily or permanently close their doors](#). These disruptions in supply lead to outages, increasingly long delays, or climbing prices. The frustration, however, is free.

## How Consumers Can Prepare

Unfortunately, even if it's your holiday wish, supply chain issues are not expected to go away before peak shopping season begins. Black Friday and Cyber Monday are just around the corner. Here's what to expect (and how to stay sane(r) while shopping).

### What to Expect

1. **Merchandise Shortages:** While retailers ([Walmart](#), [Amazon](#), [Target](#)) are doing their best to prepare, labor shortages and supply chain disruptions are still likely to impact the availability of high-demand items.
2. **Price Fluctuations:** Black Friday through Cyber Monday are known for the incredible savings offered. There's nothing quite more satisfying than relaying an unbelievable discount you scored for something that your friend paid twice as much for. Don't worry, you'll still be able to secure some gloat-worthy offers, but expect retail prices to change, based on supply and demand.

### What to Do

1. **Start Online:** 2020 sparked record online sales as more and more consumers opted to make online purchases rather than in-store purchases. This trend is anticipated to continue and many retailers offer Black Friday deals online. You'll have more options and a better chance of finding your items in stock.
2. **Shop Scarce Items Early:** It's time to prioritize your shopping lists. Begin knocking out highly sought-after items first (think popular tech, gaming systems, and hyped-up toys). The longer you wait to make these purchases, the higher the risk you run of facing outages or delays.

## How Distributors Can Prepare

Supply chain disruptions are sadly not a new problem we're contending with. Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and the holiday season, in general, will strain distribution. Consumers are eager to purchase but are hyper-aware of potential product shortages. This awareness, in most cases, does not translate into patience or understanding. Should you face stockouts or long delays, [you will likely lose customers to your competitors](#). This may seem alarmist, but there are simple ways to ensure that you're not affected by supply chain issues. Here's what to expect this holiday season and how to fix it.

## What to Expect

1. **Omnichannel Madness:** Consumers are ready and waiting. Be prepared to fulfill orders on multiple platforms and ship products to different locations. Is your Enterprise Resource Planning system fast enough to manage everything you need? If you're not sure, then the answer is likely 'no.' [Here's how to speed it up](#).
2. **The Unexpected:** Anything is possible, so be prepared. Do your best to plan, stock, price, and ship products without interruption, but be ready for when things go awry. Document *everything* (and not on spreadsheets; try [this](#) instead).

## What to Do

1. **Invest in Demand Forecasting:** Spending smarter doesn't mean spending *more*. While it's necessary to increase expenditure to fulfill orders on time, you can avoid paying last-minute surge prices to receive inventory by accurately predicting what you'll need well ahead of time. Recurrency's [Demand Forecasting](#) feature helps reduce retail stockout rates by up to 30%.
2. **Optimize Your Data:** The key to making this year successful is to review your data from the previous year. Data is invaluable, but only if it's usable. Recurrency uses artificial intelligence to [collect, clean, and analyze your existing data](#) to automatically suggest the best pricing decisions.

When you're ready to reduce stockouts, prevent overstocking and optimize your distribution, we can help. Partner with Recurrency as you prepare to take on this holiday season. Get started today by [booking a demo](#).