PURPLE DOT'S

HOLIDAY BESTSELLER PLAYBOOK

REPLENISHMENT GAPS SHOULDN'T MEAN MISSED REVENUE.

Ways to keep your bestsellers selling and drive more revenue all season long.

PURPLE DOT

HOLIDAY 2026

To the teams who have watched a bestseller sell out at the worst possible time:

It happens to the best brands every holiday season. A bestseller sells out the week demand peaks, the product page turns into a Sold Out badge or a Notify Me button, and the shoppers who were ready to buy leave with nothing to show for it. Meanwhile the restock is already on a purchase order. The only thing missing is a way to sell against it.

That's where backorders come in. They work like an insurance policy against a sellout, keeping checkout open with a clear ship date, and customers order what they want today while you ship it when it lands. Demand has somewhere to go, and you can keep selling through the busiest weeks of the year.

This playbook shows operations, ecommerce, finance and tech teams how to keep selling through a sellout, set it up once, and run it all season, so you can sell sooner, operate smarter and delight your customers. We're backorder experts that love partnering with brands to sell more.

Never miss a sale,
Purple Dot

WHY THE HOLIDAYS ARE THE MOMENT TO NEVER TRULY GO OUT OF STOCK

THE SEASON IN NUMBERS

Shoppers spend more online every year, and they notice when the item they want isn't available.

$275.1B

Forecast US online holiday sales for Nov 1 to Dec 31, 2026, up 6.7% year over year.

Adobe Digital Insights, Sept 2026

$15.1B

Forecast spend on Cyber Monday (Nov 30), expected to be the biggest online day of the season.

Adobe Digital Insights, Sept 2026

41%

of surveyed US consumers name out-of-stock items as their worst shopping experience, ahead of hidden fees.

Alchemer 2026 Holiday Shopper Report (1,002 US consumers)

21%

of surveyed US adults who hit a stockout have permanently switched brands after one.

inFlow Inventory survey, June 2026 (1,000 US adults)

UP TO 89%

more sales on out-of-stock products than Notify Me.

getpurpledot.com homepage

A SELLOUT ONLY COSTS YOU THE SALE WHEN DEMAND HAS NOWHERE TO GO. USE BACKORDERS TO CAPTURE THE SALE.

START HERE

CHANGE WHAT SHOPPERS SEE WHEN YOU SELL OUT

A sellout doesn't have to end at a Sold Out badge or a Notify Me button. Instead, you can show shoppers a clear ship date estimate and let them buy now. Find your sellout scenario below to see the play that fits.

IF THIS IS YOU

THE RESTOCK IS ON ITS WAY.

A purchase order is placed or the shipment is already moving.

WHO OWNS IT: OPERATIONS, ECOMMERCE

WHAT SHOPPERS SEE

Sold Out or Notify Me while the stock sits in transit.

THE PLAY

Open backorders against the incoming purchase order, with the ship date from your supplier or warehouse.

IF THIS IS YOU

THE SAME BESTSELLER KEEPS SELLING OUT.

Every restock sells through fast, so it is out of stock again soon after.

WHO OWNS IT: MERCHANDISING, OPERATIONS

WHAT SHOPPERS SEE

A Notify Me button that comes and goes with each restock.

THE PLAY

Keep backorders on all the time for that item, so a restock ends in a ship date, not a gap.

IF THIS IS YOU

MULTIPLE ITEMS CONSISTENTLY SAY SOLD OUT.

Sellouts are showing up across several products at once.

WHO OWNS IT: ECOMMERCE, OPERATIONS

WHAT SHOPPERS SEE

A grid of Sold Out badges in the middle of a campaign.

THE PLAY

Switch backorders on across the affected products, matched to the purchase orders you already have.

Not sure where to start? Page 5 shows what a sellout costs, so you can see which one to fix first.

DO THE MATH

WHAT A SELLOUT CAN COST YOU

You already know a sellout hurts. Here is a five-minute way to see how much, using numbers you already have.

1. **Count the sold-out bestsellers** on your store right now.
2. **Note how many days** each one stays out between restocks.
3. **Find the daily orders** each one takes when it is in stock.
4. **Multiply by your average order value.** That is the sales that have nowhere to go every day it is out.
5. **Then add the shoppers who never come back.** **41%** of surveyed US consumers name out-of-stock items as their worst shopping experience, and **21%** of adults who hit a stockout have permanently switched brands.

AI shortcut **Short on time? Copy this prompt into the AI assistant you already use, add your numbers, and let it do the math.**

> I run an online store. Estimate what sellouts cost me. For each sold-out bestseller below, multiply the days it stays out of stock by its average daily orders when in stock, then by my average order value. Show each line and the total, and ask me for anything that is missing. My bestsellers: [name, days out between restocks, daily orders in stock]. My average order value: [amount].

Treat the result as an estimate.

WANT US TO DO THE COUNTING?

Our free Out of Stock Opportunity Report looks at your store and shows where sellouts are costing you sales.

Book an Out of Stock Opportunity Call →

Alchemer 2026 Holiday Shopper Report; inFlow Inventory survey, June 2026.

THE IDEA

NOTIFY ME ASKS SHOPPERS TO COME BACK LATER. BACKORDERS LET THEM BUY NOW.

When an item sells out, you can ask for an email address, or you can take the order. Backorders (what some teams call a pre-order in this scenario) keep checkout open, show a clear ship date, and ship when stock lands.

	NOTIFY ME	BACKORDER
WHAT THE SHOPPER SEES	A button asking for an email	**A clear ship date and an Add to Cart button**
WHAT YOU GET	A contact and a hope they return	**An order and the revenue that comes with it**
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN STOCK LANDS	You send an email and hope they remember	**The order ships, and the customer is already waiting**

HOW IT RUNS ON YOUR PRODUCT PAGES

STEP 1

SHOW THE ESTIMATED SHIP DATE OR RANGE.

The product page, cart and checkout all show when the order will ship.

STEP 2

TAKE THE ORDER.

The customer checks out on your store as usual. Choose whether to charge in full upfront, take a deposit, or charge when the order ships.

STEP 3

SHIP WHEN STOCK LANDS.

Backorders stay outside your warehouse system until you are ready to fulfill, then flow through as regular orders.

Customers get order confirmation and updates by email, and before shipment they can check status, update details or cancel for a refund.

KEY PURPLE DOT FEATURE: PRE-ORDER AUTOMATION

LET PURCHASE ORDERS AUTOMATICALLY UPDATE PRE-ORDERS AND BACKORDERS WHEN PLANS CHANGE

Automated backorders are your insurance policy: when a shipment slips or a bestseller sells out, you keep selling. Pre-order Automation connects to your ERP, reads your purchase orders and shipments, and keeps ship dates and quantities current as your supply changes.

1

CONNECT

Link your ERP with a read-only connection, so Purple Dot can see the purchase orders and shipments behind every restock. Purple Dot does not make changes to your ERP.

2

SET YOUR RULES

A short rules session with the Purple Dot team sets how pre-orders and backorders are created when stock runs low or a shipment slips, such as live or as drafts for your team to review.

3

STAY CURRENT

When purchase orders or delivery dates change in your ERP, ship dates and quantities update in Purple Dot automatically, so a delay moves the date, not the sale.

BUILT FOR YOUR WHOLE TEAM

MERCHANDISING & ECOMMERCE

A delay or sellout becomes a ship date, not a lost sale. Always know what is on backorder and when it ships, without chasing a spreadsheet.

OPERATIONS

No manual date updates when a shipment moves.

TECH

Read-only access. No changes to your ERP.

ASTRID & MIYU

68%

uplift in pre-order sales with Purple Dot's Pre-order Automation.

TWO DAYS

of manual work saved every month.

THE QUESTION EVERY TEAM ASKS

WILL SHOPPERS WAIT? THE RESULTS SAY YES.

The worry is that a ship date turns shoppers away. In practice, a clear date keeps them buying.

HANDFUL

30%

of delayed inventory sold before it arrived at the warehouse.

SPOKE

97%

of pre-orders sold through in 24 hours, far above its 25% target.

ACROSS PURPLE DOT BRANDS

Brands that keep selling through pre-orders sell

50% MORE

during demand spikes (Purple Dot reported).

WHAT MAKES WAITING EASY

A DATE THEY CAN TRUST.

Show the ship date on the product page, in the cart and at checkout, and update it if it moves.

PAYMENT ON YOUR TERMS.

Charge upfront, take a deposit, or charge at shipment.

CONTROL FOR THE CUSTOMER.

An order page where they can check status, update details, or cancel before shipment for a refund.

HONEST HOLIDAY TIMING.

Not every holiday purchase is a gift. Many customers buy for themselves or for the deal, so a ship date after December 25 will not stop every order.

YOUR PLAN

FROM NOW TO JANUARY

Set up now, go early, and keep checkout open when the peak hits.

NOW
SET UP

Pick the bestsellers most likely to sell out. Match each one to its purchase order and ship date. Connect your ERP if you want dates to update automatically. Test the experience from checkout to export.

NOV 16 TO 22
GO EARLY

Automate backorders on at-risk items in the quieter week before Black Friday, so sales don't stop.

NOV 26 TO 30
PEAK WEEK

Thanksgiving, Black Friday (Nov 27), Cyber Monday (Nov 30). Keep checkout open and watch low-stock items daily.

DEC 1 TO 25
KEEP SELLING

Backorders switch on as items run low. Be clear on ship dates, especially leading up to December 25.

JANUARY
REVIEW

Update shipping estimates, read the demand data, and plan next year's buy.

PUT IT INTO ACTION

ALIGN YOUR TEAM

Use this checklist to get every team ready before backorders go live.

OPERATIONS AND SUPPLY CHAIN

CONFIRM

- [ ] Which items have a purchase order in motion
- [ ] How backorders export to your 3PL or WMS
- [ ] Your mixed-cart rule
- [ ] Who updates ship dates, or the rules that do it

Will backorders create a mess in the warehouse?

THE ANSWER USING PURPLE DOT

Backorders are held outside your warehouse system until you are ready to fulfill, then flow through as regular orders.

ECOMMERCE AND DIGITAL

CONFIRM

- [ ] Product page, cart and checkout show the estimated ship date
- [ ] The ship date matches the incoming purchase order
- [ ] Sold Out and Notify Me don't show if they were used previously
- [ ] A test order runs from checkout to confirmation email with the right date
- [ ] One person owns checking the date each time an item flips to backorder

Do we need to change how we promote it?

THE ANSWER USING PURPLE DOT

No. The item keeps selling, so promote it the way you always do. Your job is to check that the ship date is accurate and orders are flowing.

FINANCE

CONFIRM

- [ ] Payment option (upfront, deposit, or charge on ship)
- [ ] When funds are collected and how refunds work
- [ ] How backorder revenue is reported

When do we get paid, and what if someone cancels?

THE ANSWER USING PURPLE DOT

You choose the payment timing. Customers can cancel before shipment and receive a refund with a self-service portal.

TECH AND PRODUCT

CONFIRM

- [ ] Backorder integration on your storefront
- [ ] ERP connection for automation
- [ ] A test order from checkout to export

How much does this change our current stack?

THE ANSWER USING PURPLE DOT

The ERP connection is read-only, and Purple Dot makes no changes to your ERP.

MEET PURPLE DOT

NEVER MISS A SALE

Purple Dot is the premium pre-order and backorder platform for flexible commerce. We are trusted by modern brands to keep revenue flowing when inventory is delayed or out of stock: customers order what they want today, and you ship it when it's ready.

OH POLLY

72%

increase in pre-order GMV, with pre-order revenue up 49%, year over year.

TIMEX

NEARLY 50%

of incoming stock sold on the first day of pre-order for a high-velocity collaboration.

ASTRID & MIYU

68%

uplift in pre-order sales with Pre-order Automation.

Not sure which of your sellouts to start with? Get your Out of Stock Opportunity Report. We will look at your store, find where sellouts are costing you sales, and show you how to keep selling and drive more revenue. Book a short call and we will walk through it with you.

Book an Out of Stock Opportunity Call →

www.getpurpledot.com

Wishing you a season of full carts, and sales that keep going.

PURPLE DOT