

DECODING

# BFCM

Inside the  
Holiday  
Shopping  
Cycle



# A letter from Arvind, Swym's CEO

To our partners and industry specialists,

**Your margin for error has disappeared.**

Most brands pay a massive premium for BFCM traffic only to watch 97% of it walk away without buying. That is a lot of wasted intent. When holiday shoppers leave, their context disappears and your peak season momentum stalls.



**"Gut feeling" is no longer a viable business strategy.**

The gap between a Black Friday click and a Cyber Monday conversion is where holiday revenue goes to die. Without a way to capture those signals, you are stuck in a cycle of expensive acquisition and one-off transactions.

But you can't fix holiday friction if you can't see where it happens.

**That's why you are reading this.**

At Swym, we handle billions of shopper interactions every month. So we've spent the last few weeks comparing our 2024 BCFM benchmarks against the new realities of 2025. We want you to have this data to stop reacting to the market and start anticipating it.

Specifically, this report will help you understand:

- How customers behave during BFCM
- What shopping patterns repeat throughout this season
- What strategies make them convert more

**Let's solve one very specific, expensive problem together: lost intent.**

\*\* All data comes directly from our own network of millions of real BFCM shopper interactions.

# 1. More traffic, less engaged

To no one's surprise, the BFCM week sees a significant increase (27.2%) in user traffic across all industries. However, engagement actions, such as wishlist additions, do not keep pace, experiencing a more moderate 21.7% lift.



27.2%

Traffic



21.7%

Engagement Actions

Don't expect your BFCM users to be "higher quality"; expect them to be faster and more numerous. Your strategy should focus on handling the volume and making the path to purchase as friction-less as possible for these "hit-and-run" shoppers.

In weeks prior to the big event, people browse and save multiple items to compare them. During BFCM, they are likely coming in with a specific goal: **they find the item, buy it, and move on.**

## Decision for Brands:

Since your audience is becoming less logged-in during your highest traffic period, focusing on "Add to Wishlist as Guest" features or simple email-capture popups becomes critical.

## 2. Impulse buyers vs. long-time planners

Across all industries, BFCM consumer planning behavior has remained remarkably stable year-over-year, but the market itself is a study in contrasts.

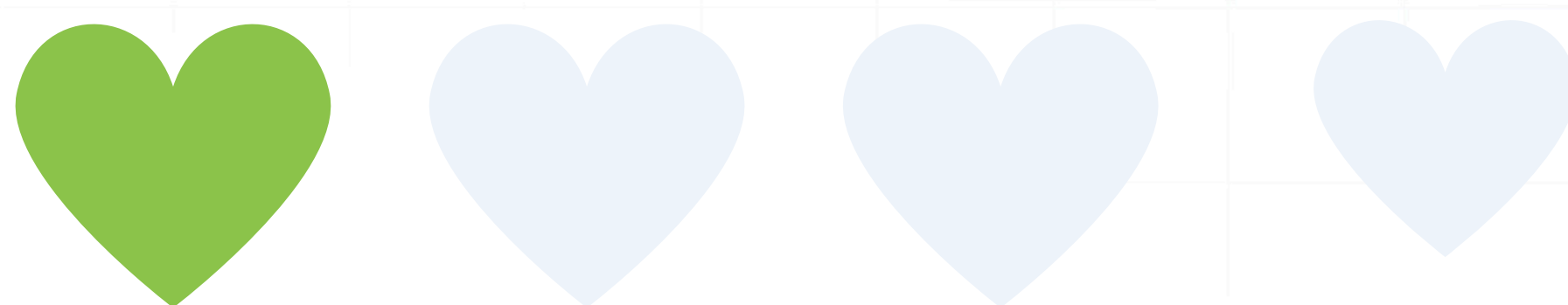
Consideration Window	Median % of Buyers
0 - 29 Days (Impulse)	61.0%
30 - 59 Days	9.0%
60 - 89 Days	5.0%
90 - 119 Days	3.6%
120+ Days (Deep Planning)	18.9%

In a typical industry, buyers either decide in the last 30 days (61%) or they have known what they wanted for over 4 months (18.9%). The middle planning months (30–120 days) are actually the smallest segments. This suggests that for many brands, **marketing should be most aggressive either very early (July/August) or very late (November)**, with less emphasis on the "bridge" months in between.

More than 60% of shoppers are driven by the near-instant momentum of less than a 30-day window.

But even if a big chunk of shoppers move fast, **a significant 40% considerate core has been carefully weighing their decision for over a month.**

This means your considerate audience is not just planning a month early; they are likely monitoring your brand for an entire quarter. This behavior seems to stay constant over the years. Though slightly more pronounced in 2024, the pattern is evident.



# 1/4

**people knew what they wanted at least 90 days before BFCM.**

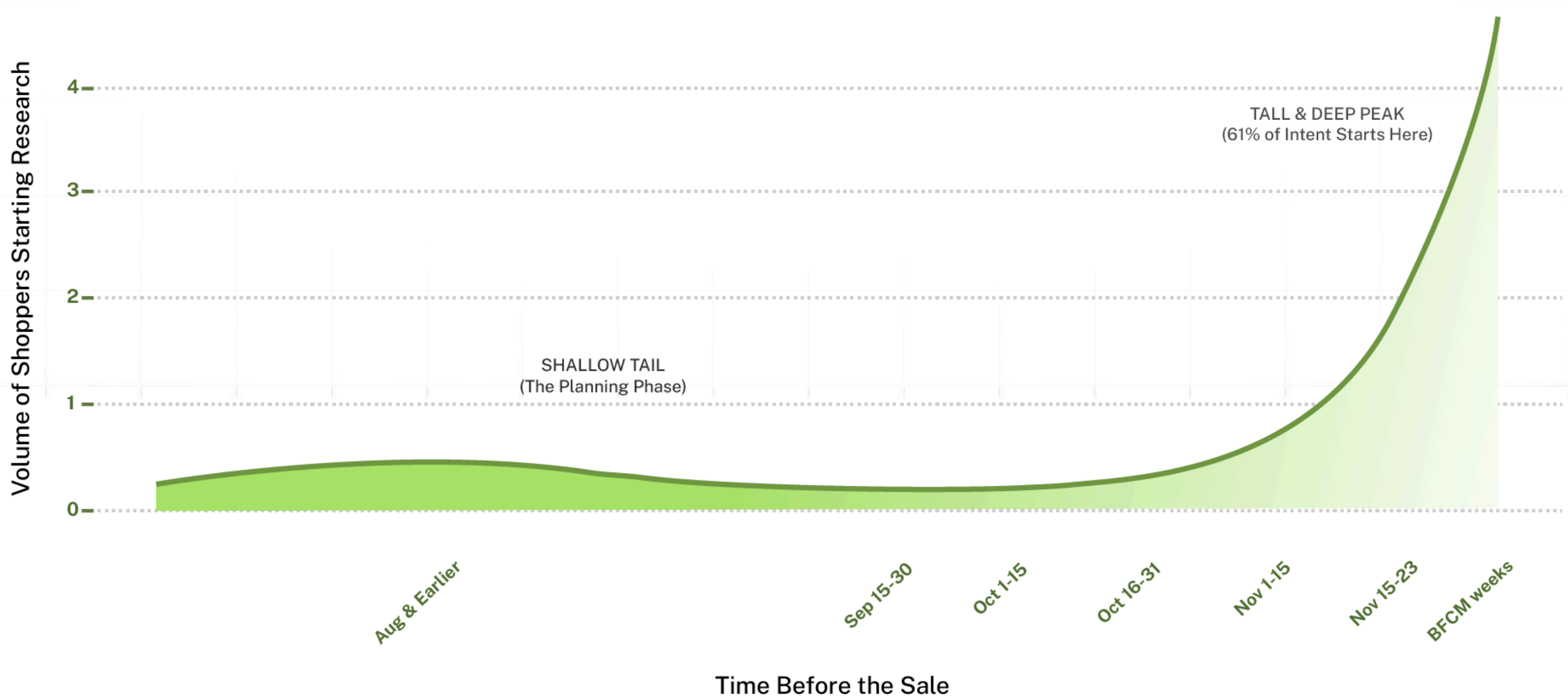
**Decision for Brands:**

You can reliably expect that nearly half of your BFCM volume comes from consumers who have had your product in mind since at least October. That's why tools like wishlists and automated alerts have become such an essential part of the customer journey. As the cost of acquisition continues to rise, the only viable path forward is to maximize the value of every visitor.

## 2.1 Shoppers' decision making

9 Days

A BFCM median user takes 9 days to move from visit to purchase



With an industry median of only 9 days, 50% of all shoppers decide what they want in the final week and a half. This makes the curve look like a steep mountain.

- **Aug & Earlier:** A persistent long tail. While volume is lower than the final rush, this is when the most loyal and highest-value planners are browsing..
- **From Oct 1 to Oct 31:** The curve is shallow. Engagement is steady but volume decreases. This is the "warm-up" period.
- **From Nov 1st to Black Week:** This is where the curve gets deep and intense. Volume is high, and shoppers move to action.

### Decision for Brands:

The tail (Sep-Oct) requires low-pressure retargeting to stay top-of-mind while the peak requires high-pressure, high-frequency messaging.

- **Aug & Earlier:** A persistent long tail. While volume is lower than the final rush, this is when the most loyal and highest-value planners are browsing..
- **From Oct 1 to Oct 31:** The curve is shallow. Engagement is steady but volume decreases. This is the "warm-up" period.
- **From Nov 1st to Black Week:** This is where the curve gets deep and intense. Volume is high, and shoppers move to action.

#### Decision for Brands:

The tail (Sep-Oct) requires low-pressure retargeting to stay top-of-mind while the peak requires high-pressure, high-frequency messaging.

## 2.2 Nuances by industry

Now, not all industries behave the same way. Certainly, there are some that move faster than others.



On the other hand, categories like Health and Food & Drink show unusually high long-term planning (120+ days), with almost 30% of items planned 4+ months out.

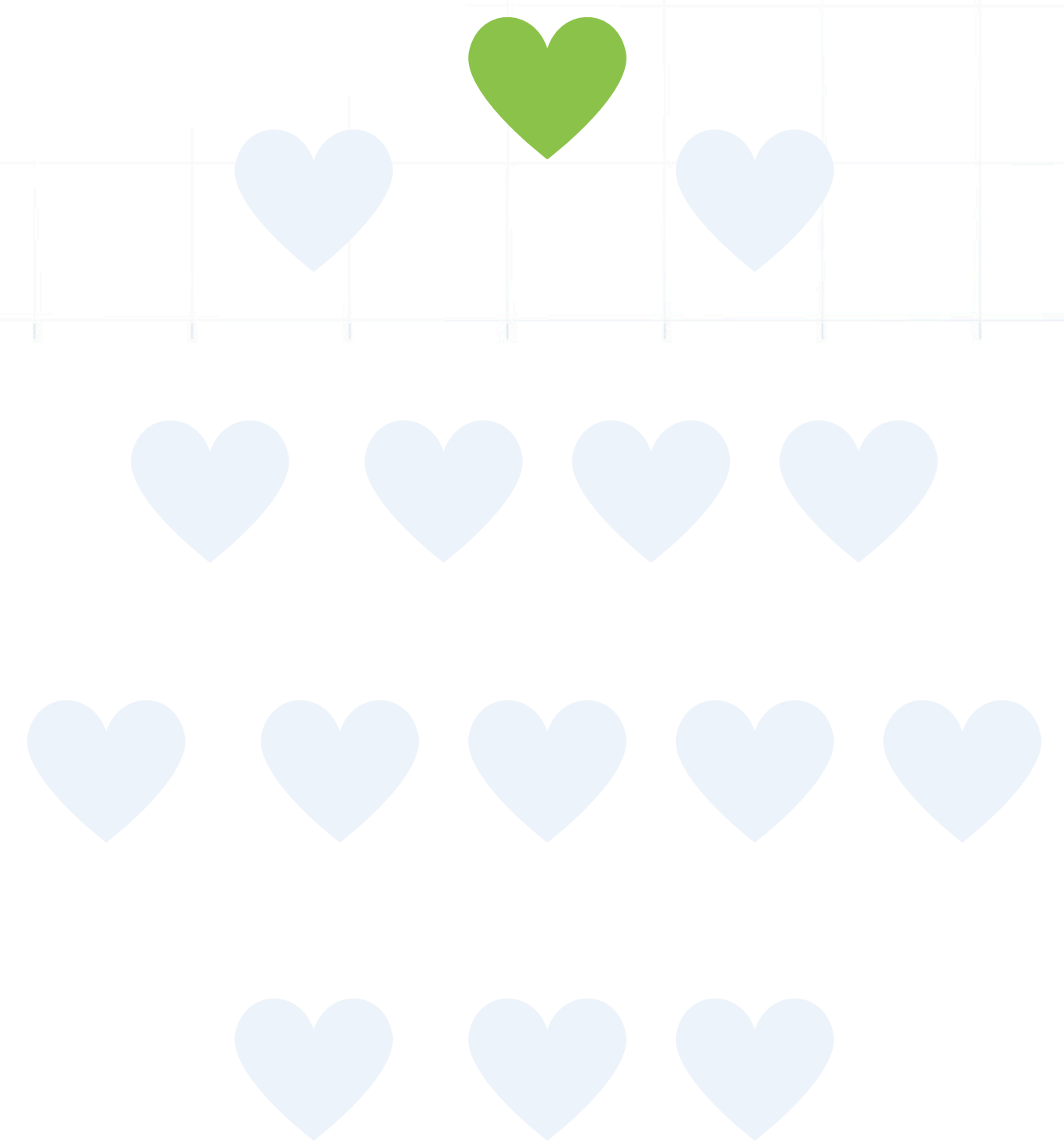
Top three industries with the shortest average window between product selection and final sale.

### Decision for Brands:

In these categories, BFCM is often used to "stock up" on known favorites rather than discover new products. Brands should focus on loyalty rewards and subscription-based offers for existing customers, as nearly 30% of buyers likely already know exactly what they want by July or August.

# 15 to 1

Users in Antiques & Collectibles added 15.4 products for every 1 purchased



## 2.3 From interest to action

Contrary to the idea that BFCM is only about impulse, **the time between adding an item and buying it actually increases during the sale period.**

# 4+

Shoppers take nearly 4 days longer to pull the trigger once an item is in their cart (7.5 days vs 3.5 days), as they spend the BFCM week comparing deals.

The intent window more than doubles in length. During BFCM, people are purchasing items they have been sitting on for longer than they do during the rest of the year. They aren't just buying what they see today; **they are finally pulling the trigger on items they added to their list a week or more ago.**

### 3. Conversion lifts

**While traffic surges 21% on average, the conversion rate almost doubles.** This suggests that shoppers are hunting for the best deals and don't hesitate to pull the trigger once they find them.



85%

For a typical industry, the conversion rate nearly doubles (+84.7%) during BFCM

The numbers speak for themselves: conversion rates on wishlisted items reach unprecedented levels.

15.3%

Beauty & Fitness

15.3%

Arts & Entertainment

35.4%

Travel

**\*Top three industries with the highest conversion rate during BFCM**



+352%

Travel is the leading category with a +352% conversion lift, jumping from 5.3% (baseline period) to 23.9% (Black Week). This suggests it is also the most responsive category to price drops.

After analyzing conversion rates across all categories for BFCM, here is what they look like:

Rank	Industry	Conversion (%)*
1	Travel	35.43%
2	Arts & Entertainment	15.43%
3	Beauty & Fitness	15.35%
4	Food & Drink	13.79%
5	Books & Literature	12.79%
6	Pets & Animals	11.66%
7	Toys & Hobbies	11.59%
8	Finance	11.39%
9	Autos & Vehicles	9.40%
10	Business & Industrial	9.04%
11	Fashion & Apparel	8.96%
12	Home & Garden	8.90%
13	Sports	6.69%
14	Antiques & Collectibles	4.78%
15	Consumer Electronics	3.62%

\*This represents the percentage of unique wishlist users who ultimately made a purchase during the sale.

## 4. Bundles Gain Traction



**2.12**

On average, shoppers purchase two items per transaction.

### Decision for Brands:

**BFCM shoppers are pre-conditioned to buy multiple items.** Implement upsell and bundling strategies at to align with this universal consumer behavior and maximize your Average Order Value (AOV). For example, since your "typical" buyer is already looking for 2–3 items, a discount threshold (e.g., "Spend \$100, save 20%") will likely perform better than a flat discount on a single item.

## 5. AOV lowers

Interestingly, while conversion and item count went up significantly, the average order value dropped by 17.3% during BFCM week.

During the baseline months, shoppers tend to wishlist "dream" or higher-priced items. When the sale starts, the behavior shifts toward attainable items. Shoppers wishlist things they actually intend to buy immediately with a discount, rather than just high-value items they are dreaming about.

However, the data shows that shoppers who engage with **intent-capture technologies don't just convert more often but they also spend more.**

**\$175.76**

**Average Site AOV**

**\$218.96**

**Average Swym-Attributed AOV**

## 5.1 Back-in-Stock campaigns lead the way

**BFCM is an intense but brief period.**

Stockouts are the primary revenue killers of the peak season. However, our data proves that this lost momentum is recoverable.

Automated, high-intent features like Back-in-Stock (BIS) alerts prove to be one of the most effective strategies for maximizing profit and ensuring no potential sale is left on the table.

### Decision for Brands:

If your brand experiences stockouts during BFCM, do not assume the revenue is lost. A significant portion of that demand is recoverable. Make sure to send personalized notifications once you are recovered.

While BFCM opportunities are massive, **the real challenge for brands is effectively nudging users across the finish line.** For industries with established Back in Stock programs, the revenue generated per email sent is remarkably high.

Industry	BIS AOV (\$)	Standard AOV (\$)	AOV Lift (\$)
Autos & Vehicles	\$305.26	\$104.01	+\$201.25
Apparel	\$250.00	\$179.25	+\$70.75
Home & Garden	\$201.06	\$98.05	+\$103.01
Sports	\$161.93	\$135.14	+\$26.79
Consumer Electronics	\$119.03	\$19.00	+\$100.03

While standard marketing emails might earn cents per send, a Back-in-Stock alert is highly targeted "gold." If you have stockouts during BFCM, an automated BIS system is your most effective tool for "saving" the sale.

**\$35.63**

Median Revenue per Alert

## 5.1. Price drops are expected

Modern BFCM has evolved into a sophisticated treasure hunt, where **price is the ultimate driver of intent**. Shoppers aren't just looking for products; they are actively hunting for value.

However, price sensitivity isn't uniform; it varies significantly by category.

**In theory, categories like Travel or Arts & Entertainment,** which have a relatively high average product value (\$300 - \$600), tend to be more susceptible to price drops.

Shoppers view these as "considered luxuries." They want them, but they are highly sensitive to the price. A markdown here acts as a massive "unlock," moving conversion more than in any other tier.

**Categories like Fashion or Toys** see a strong, healthy lift, but because people buy them year-round, the response isn't as "binary" as the luxury group.

Shoppers in this tier expect a discount but will buy anyway if they need it. The markdown drives volume but doesn't fundamentally change the nature of the industry's conversion.

**Categories like Health, or Pets & Animals** are considered "need-based" industries. And they appear to be the least susceptible to a price drop.



While a discount is nice, it doesn't significantly change when or if they buy. However, as seen before, long time planners may be checking their favourite recurring products to see if they are on sale, so a sweet coupon will not harm.

That said, price drop campaigns consistently prove their efficiency. Tailoring these alerts to items the shopper has already shown interest in ensures the message cuts through the BFCM noise.

Susceptibility	Industry Type	Shopper Logic
Highest	Travel / Entertainment	"I'm waiting for the sale to go."
Moderate	Fashion / Toys	"I'm buying gifts anyway; glad it's on sale."
Lowest	Health / Pets	"I buy this when I need it, regardless of price."

However, price sensitivity isn't uniform; it varies significantly by category.

**Most Responsive Industries to Email Price Drop Alerts during BFCM**

Industry	Click-to-Order (%)
Sports	20.38%
Food & Drink	17.07%
Consumer Electronics	16.67%

**Decision for Brands:**  
 If your brand is struggling to make the peak season profitable, this shift in strategy is critical. Stop relying solely on broad-based price drops, and leverage these high-intent signals to automate personalized campaigns.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

# Customer Engagement Platform

## Built on Shopper Intent

We've covered a lot of ground, but the message is simple: **Don't waste your budget on attracting demand without the right technology to capitalize on it.**

Swym empowers brands like yours to bridge the gap between casual browsing and long-term loyalty, so that your hard-earned BFCM momentum drives measurable, year-round ROAS.

- Convert "just browsing" into actionable first-party data.
- Trigger personalized, high-converting communications based on explicit interest.
- Scale with Confidence. Our infrastructure is built to handle the world's heaviest traffic loads without sacrificing performance or shopper experience.

[Book a demo](#)

[Try it for yourself](#)

