Arrow & Flame

FREE GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES · ARROW & FLAME X PRATT ADVISORY

The Holiday Weekend Playbook

Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, Cyber Monday, and Giving Tuesday, done the small business way. Four days, one offer, full price, and a plan you can actually staff.

Fri, Nov 27	Sat, Nov 28	Mon, Nov 30	Tue, Dec 1
Black Friday	Small Business Saturday	Cyber Monday	Giving Tuesday

The five rules for all four days

1. **No discounts.** You can't out-cheap the big box stores, so don't try. Sell on a deadline, a cap, first access, or a gift.
2. **One hero offer.** Pick one thing. Everything else is the supporting cast, or next year.
3. **Price it to cover the cap.** Food, labor, packaging, shipping, fees. If it doesn't make money at full price, it's a donation, and that's Tuesday's job.
4. **One link, the same words everywhere.** Email, Instagram, Google, the sign at the register. Same offer, same deadline, same link.
5. **Real deadlines.** Close it when you said you would. That's what makes the next deadline work.

BEFORE FRIDAY

The 60-minute setup

Do these before Thanksgiving. Most take five minutes.

- [ ] **Holiday hours on Google.** Google Business Profile, then Hours, then Special hours. Thanksgiving through January 1, including the days you're closed. Match Apple Maps, Yelp, and your website.
- [ ] **One page for the offer.** What it is, price, how many, order-by date, pickup or shipping, one button. Plain text, not a photo or a PDF, so Google and AI tools can read it.
- [ ] **Gift card button at the top of your homepage.** Test it on your phone, start to finish, with a real card.
- [ ] **Your list, ready.** Export your customer emails from your POS or online store. Write the first email now, not Friday morning.
- [ ] **Staff the weekend you're selling.** Pickup windows, a packer, someone on the phone. Don't sell more than the kitchen or the warehouse can deliver.
- [ ] **Know your numbers.** Write down last year's sales for the same four days, so you know on Wednesday whether it worked.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27

Black Friday

The day people are already in buying mode. Give them something worth full price and a reason to buy today.

PLAY	HOW IT WORKS
Gift cards with a gift guide	Sell cards at full value and name what each buys: "dinner for two," "a dozen and coffee," "the party tray." Paid today, redeemed in January when it's slow.
Gift card plus a thing	Card in a box with a cookie, a jar of your sauce, a tote. Something you already make or stock. Don't buy merch for this.
Numbered holiday box	Your best sellers in a box, numbered (#1 of 150). Real numbers only. When it's gone, say so.
Holiday pre-orders	The holiday table, the pie, the dessert spread. Paid now, picked up later, with an order-by date and a cap you can make.
Book the party now	Book a December or January event by Cyber Monday and get first pick of dates. Access, not a discount. Deposit to hold.

Do

- Send your email early in the morning. One offer, one link.
- Post the offer on Google Business Profile, not just Instagram.
- Put a QR code for gift cards at the register.

Skip

- Percent-off sitewide sales. They train customers to wait.
- Doorbusters you can't staff.
- Five offers at once. Nobody remembers five.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28

Small Business Saturday

This one is yours. People go out on purpose to shop local. Make it worth the trip.

PLAY	HOW IT WORKS
In-store only item	One thing that only exists in your shop, that day. A flavor, a bundle, a limited run. Real counts.
Neighbor bundle	Team up with the shop next door: your box plus their wine, candle, or flowers, sold at the full combined price. Agree in writing who gets paid, who packs, and who handles returns.
Shop Small kit	American Express started Small Business Saturday and puts out free Shop Small signs and social graphics for small businesses. Look for them early, they go fast.
Local outlets	Send your offer to your BID, Main Street program, neighborhood newsletter, and local news sites. One paragraph, one photo, the date, and the link.
Collect emails at the counter	A sign-up sheet or QR code for "first dibs on the next drop." Saturday's walk-ins are next month's email list.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30

Cyber Monday

The people buying from their couch. If you do one thing, send one email with one link.

PLAY	HOW IT WORKS
E-gift cards	The easiest Cyber Monday offer if you have nothing to ship. Delivered by email, buyer picks the send date.
Shippable product	Sauces, spice mixes, cookies, coffee, merch: whatever ships well. Put a ship-by date for holiday delivery in the email and on the page.
Last call	Cyber Monday is the last day of your pre-order or party-booking window. Send "closes tonight" in the afternoon.
Classes and experiences	A cooking class, a tasting, a chef's table seat, sold as a gift with a January or February date. Fills a slow month.

Check before you send

- [ ] Checkout works on a phone, start to finish.
- [ ] Shipping cost is clear before the last step. Surprise fees kill orders.
- [ ] The email's button goes straight to the product, not your homepage.
- [ ] If your store can send an abandoned cart email, turn it on.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1

Giving Tuesday

Three days of asking people to buy. Tuesday is about giving back. Don't run a sale. Run something you'd be proud to tell people about in January.

PLAY	HOW IT WORKS
Pick one local cause	One nonprofit you actually know: the food bank, the shelter, the school. One you'll still be helping next year.
Make the give specific	"$1 from every coffee today goes to the food bank" beats "a portion of proceeds." Or give a flat amount and say it out loud.
Round up at the register	Ask customers to round up for the cause. Your POS may have a round-up or donation button. Check now.
Drop-off drive	Coats, canned goods, toys, pet food. People bring something in, and they come back to pick something up.
Give your skills	Feed the volunteers, donate a party tray to the gala, give a gift card to the raffle. Your best product, not your leftovers.
Report back	Post the total and a thank-you, and tag the nonprofit. "We raised $612 for the food bank" is the best post you'll make all week.

If you advertise that a share of sales goes to a charity, some states have rules about how you say it and what you report. Get the nonprofit's OK in writing, use their real name, and check your state's rules or ask your accountant.

THE SEND SCHEDULE

What to send, and when

One email a day is fine during this week. People expect it. Use the same offer and link every time.

DAY	EMAIL	SOCIAL AND GOOGLE
Mon 11/23 to Wed 11/25	Heads up: "Here's what's coming Friday." Regulars get first access.	Post the offer on Google Business Profile. Behind-the-scenes on Instagram.
Thu 11/26	Skip it, or a short thank-you. No selling on Thanksgiving.	Holiday hours post.
Fri 11/27	"It's live." The offer, the cap, the deadline, one button.	Offer post plus Stories through the day. Update the count.
Sat 11/28	"Come see us today." The in-store item and your hours.	Photos of the shop and the line. Tag your neighbor bundle partner.
Sun 11/29	Optional: "What's left."	Customer photos, reposts, thank-yous.
Mon 11/30	Morning: Cyber Monday offer. Afternoon: "Closes tonight."	Link in bio points to the one offer page.
Tue 12/1	The cause, why you picked it, how to help. No sale.	Post with the nonprofit, then post the total.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2

After the weekend

- [ ] **Write the numbers down.** Sales by day, gift cards sold, pre-orders, new email sign-ups. Compare to last year.
- [ ] **Send a thank-you email.** No offer. Just thanks, and the Giving Tuesday total.
- [ ] **Ask for reviews.** Ask everyone who picked up an order. Ask them to mention what they bought, because AI tools read review text.
- [ ] **Plan January now.** Every gift card sold is a visit coming in a slow month. Have something ready for them to add on when they come in.
- [ ] **Keep the list.** Note what sold out, what sat, and what you'd cap differently. Next November starts here.

Want a second set of eyes on your holiday plan? Take the free 5-minute mini audit on your phone: restaurants and cafes at arrowandflame.com/mini-audit, product brands at arrowandflame.com/mini-audit-brands. Or book 30 minutes: calendly.com/doron-arrowandflame/30min

Doron Petersan, Arrow & Flame · Tory Pratt, Pratt Advisory · Fix the friction, keep the flame.