



Appcommerce Peak Report 2021

Flash Guide to Black Friday and Cyber Weekend Sales



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Peak 2021 in Numbers*

39%

Increase in downloads
on 2019**

56%

YoY decrease in hours
spent in apps during
Black Friday

41%

YoY decrease in number
of transactions***

3.4%

YoY increase in
value of revenue per
transaction***

49%

YoY increase in App
Story interactions***

10:00

best time to send
push notifications***

*Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures

** YoY cp. to Cyber Week 2019, including Black Friday to Cyber Monday, 29 November-2 December 2019

*** YoY cp. to Cyber Week 2020, including Black Friday to Cyber Monday, 27-30 November 2020

Disclaimer: Figures represent a YoY poq platform snapshot and are therefore not like-for-like

Executive Summary

Apps hold their own despite 'new normal' conditions

Who'd have thought the difference in the world where poq operates (Europe, North America and Australasia) between Black Friday 2020 and 2021 would be defined by vaccine rollouts? But 2021's traditional festive season kickoff is difficult to compare directly to the last, given the fact that 2020's store footfall was throttled by lockdowns and social distancing.

Last year, consumers began their festive bargain hunting glued to their mobile devices at home. This was reflected in record breaking year-on-year (YoY) growth in key performance indicators (KPIs), including mobile app downloads, hours spent in-app and transaction volumes. But with stores reopened, a 'new normal' has emerged during Cyber Week 2021.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, comparisons of 2021's app acquisition KPIs particularly did not match the exceptional levels of the same period last year. But other measures of app shopper demand, such as average order value (AOV) and App Story interactions, grew. So, it will be essential for app owners to build on the value customers now perceive when shopping via app as opposed to ecommerce, as well as physical, retail alternatives.

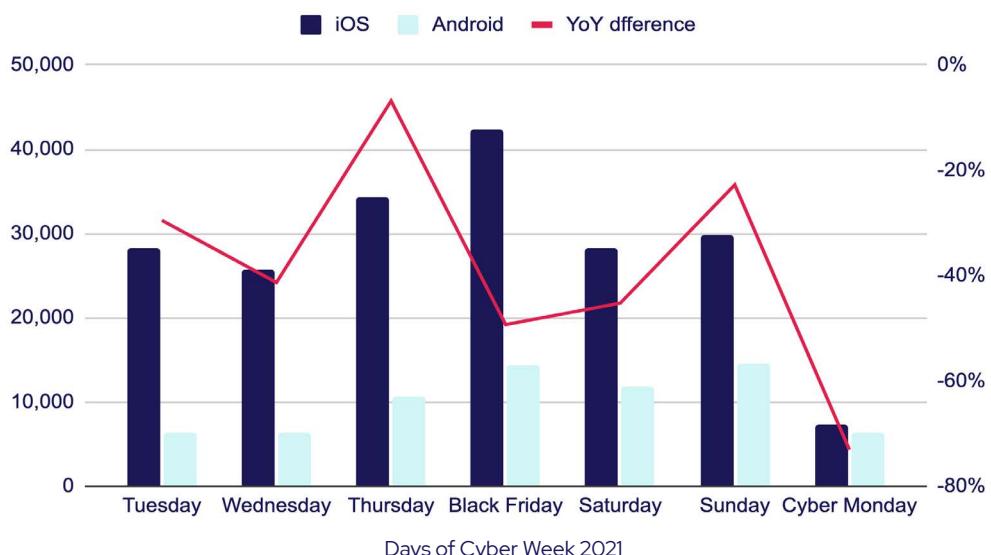
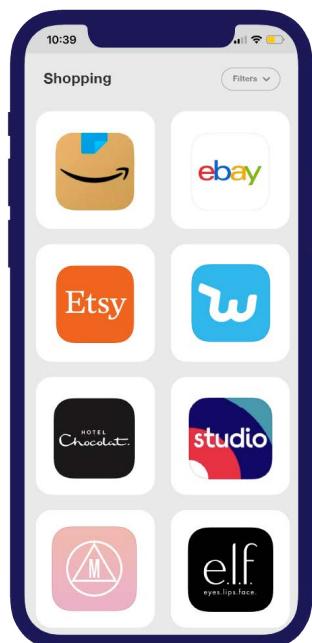


What we mean when we say *Cyber Week 2021*:
**From Tuesday, 23 November, up to and including
Black Friday to Cyber Monday, 26-29 November 2021*****

Maintaining App Acquisition

Poq mobile app downloads over Cyber Week 2021 fell 40% compared to the same period in 2020. This follows the fact that [Black Friday spending online decreased](#) for the very first time. When tracked against 2019 KPIs, Cyber Week app installs actually grew 39%.

Comparing 2021 downloads YoY, the decrease was less pronounced for Android apps (-24%) than iOS (-44%). But, the aggregate difference narrowed to only 7% on Thursday, 25 November 2020 levels – Black Friday's eve – maintaining almost pandemic-induced levels in bargain hunting and shopping app interest before peaking on Cyber Monday (see chart below). This confirms the run-up to Black Friday is as key to app acquisition as ever; just as it is on the day itself in physical stores, but where [footfall also declined](#) for the first time in history.



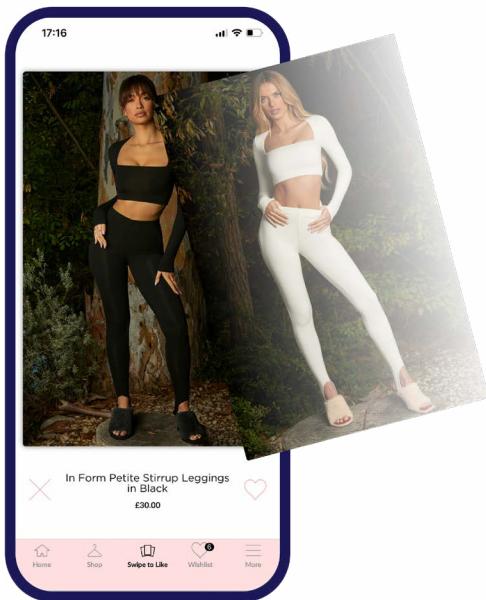
Balancing engagement and convenience

As another key acquisition indicator, time spent in-app, dropped by just over half (51%) on 2020's exceptional 90% YoY growth. This has still delivered an uptick of 34% more dwell time since 2019, which delivered only 8% more compared to 2021.



Top tips:

Shoppers were more time constrained searching for bargains in 2021. But other indicators show engagement is still growing. Creating an appcommerce experience that delivers engagement beyond the static ecommerce scroll for discovery, using augmented reality (AR) or dynamic merchandising features, can support higher conversion, as well as dwell time.



Mobilizing App Conversion

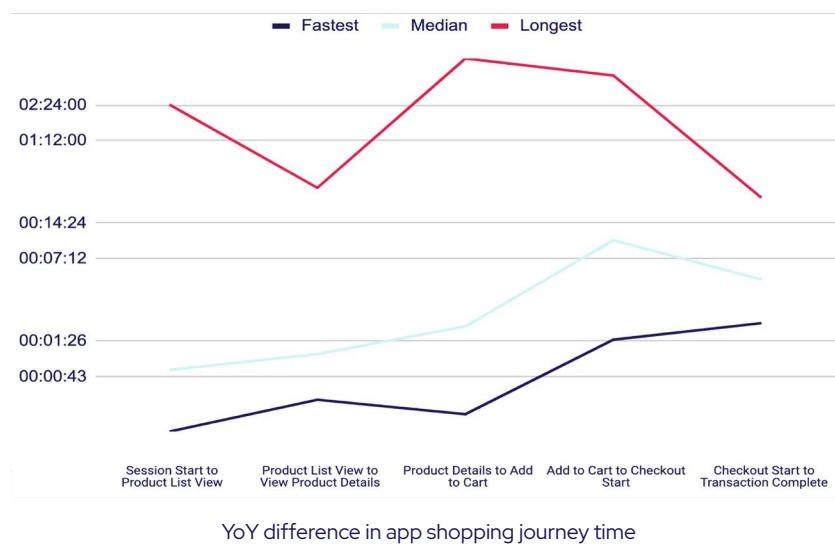
Having identified that app shoppers spent less time in-app during Cyber Week 2021 than the previous year, it follows that transaction volumes were also lower (-40%). They were, however, far more resilient among Android shoppers, dropping only 7% YoY, in comparison with their iOS counterparts (-48%).

But, as only the first year since lockdowns skewed demand towards digital shopping, 2021 actually maintained other conversion trends growth. For those transactions that took place over poq's appcommerce platform during Cyber Week, average order value increased 3% to \$69.15. So, while consumers may have been shopping around more elsewhere, app owners encouraged their customers to spend more, not less, during this discount season.

Increasing appcommerce engagement

A key app conversion trend that has remained positive YoY is the time taken to complete a shopping journey (see chart below). Overall, shopping journeys were faster, with big time savings for the median (50th) and fastest (75th) percentiles.

Notably, the journey from Session Start to Product List View took longer as shoppers engaged with native app features, such as Swipe to Like, App, Stories or their wishlist. The slowest cohort spent much longer browsing before visiting specific product pages.



Top tip:

It is essential to not only ensure an app offers the convenience of helping shoppers quickly find what they want with dynamic search, but to also offer features that can engage and bring products to life, such as Swipe to Like, App Stories or AR sizing.

Growing App Retention

Although appcommerce customers value the speed and convenience of apps, some were dwelling longer to find a bargain, as well as spending more. This is evidenced by the increase in browsing time among the slowest cohort of shoppers.

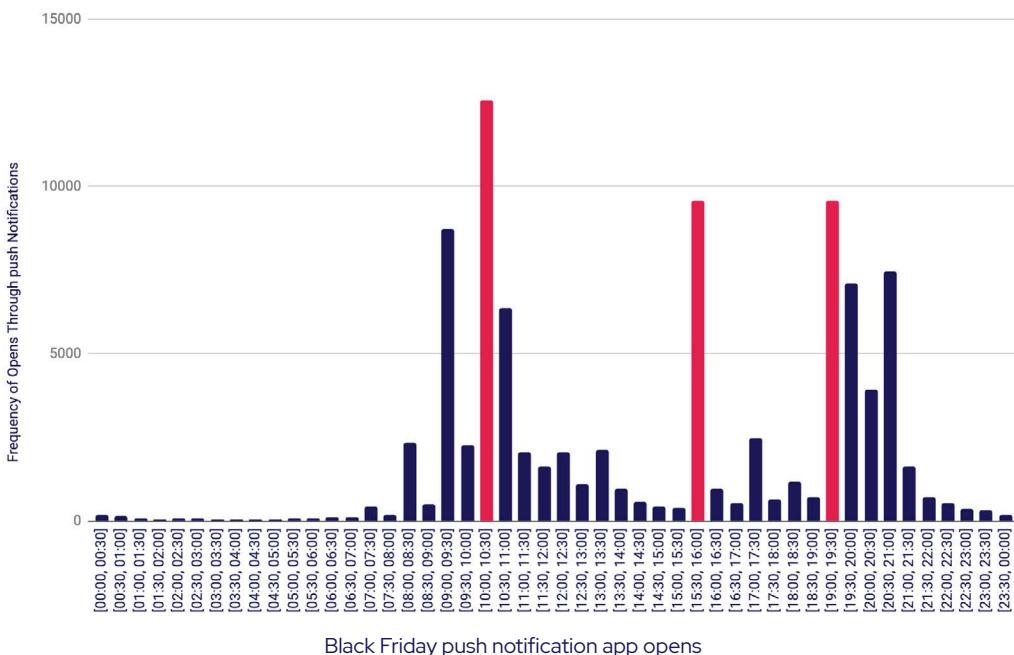
However, apps increase not only dwell time, but also engagement, as is demonstrated by the fact that poq tracked a 49% YoY increase in App Story interactions during Cyber Week 2021. This is especially good when considering apps have had to fight much harder to acquire customers. Once acquired, engagement, frequency and spend trends were all positive.



Capturing customers' attention

The other benefit of prioritising ways to retain app customers is the direct line of communication it opens to those who have opted into to receive push notifications. Resulting metrics, including revenue and transaction volumes were all higher than 2020. Session push penetration rose 1.8% YoY to almost 10% of all notifications sent.

Examining the frequency of app opens through push notifications during Black Friday 2021 (see chart below) suggests these shoppers were most receptive mid-morning and again during late afternoon and evening. Last year, 1200-1230, 1700-1730 and 1900-1930 were most successful.



Top tip:

Push notifications played a much bigger role for poq app owners during Cyber Week 2021. Given the sheer scale of and noise surrounding promotions at this time of year, they are becoming a powerful tool to engage loyal customers with timely and targeted messages.

Conclusion

The appcommerce trends of Cyber Week 2021 confirm how strategically important a role mobile now plays in a total retail offer, alongside how effective native mobile apps are at converting browsers into buyers. Native mobile apps are also most effective for harnessing digital shopping convenience and engagement to nurture those most frequent and loyal customers, who shop both instore and online.

The three main strategic takeaways from peak 2021 are:



The 'new normal' has reset the role of mobile as the strategic channel for digital growth, even during discount events, such as Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Native apps further bridge the gap between instore and online, offering customers a digital flagship experience that can also incentivise and enhance a physical store visit. App Store optimization (ASO) that highlights convenience and engagement should therefore be an essential part of the digital marketing mix.



Overall, appcommerce shopping journeys were quicker in 2021 compared to the same period in the previous year. Shoppers added products to their carts and progressed to checkout more quickly. But it took slightly longer to check out compared to 2020. Getting the balance between convenience and engagement right will be crucial to converting newly acquired app customers as effectively as the most frequent and loyal ones. It will also pay to streamline checkout processes, by offering a variety of payment options.



Cyber Week 2021 retention trends clearly show that apps are more competitive and resilient the more convenient and engaging customers perceive them to be. Ensuring the continual development of sophisticated in-app search, dynamic merchandising and immersive engagement features, including Swipe to Like, App Stories and virtual fitting for example, is the most effective way to maximize app customer loyalty and retention.

Still an appcommerce skeptic?

Try our simple [App Revenue Calculator](#) to discover how much revenue an app could generate for your business.

Looking to enhance your app performance?

Subscribe to our blog for the latest appcommerce trends, news, insights, resources and webinars, or [speak to one of our app experts](#) to answer all of your app questions.

Ready to turbocharge your app strategy?

To discuss any of the findings in this guide or discover how poq can help your business meet consumers' rising digital expectations and capitalize on superior native appcommerce-powered digital customer experiences, please contact marketing@poqcommerce.com or visit our website at poqcommerce.com.



Empowering you to create outstanding customer experiences. Anywhere.

Present your brand in a storefront unique to you:

The poq platform gives you the power to maximize your presence in the appcommerce space. Be where your customers are and create beautiful, intuitive apps that deliver joyful shopping experiences to your customers.



Trusted global apps

With nearly 50 apps, recognized by Forrester as a "Strong Performer" in the Mobile Commerce and Engagement Platforms and as Mobile technology Vendor of the year by Retail Systems, poq generated over \$600m in app GMV for customers during 2020.





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#appcommerce



Where your
customers are