FREE FIELD SHEET · Nº 124
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KEYWORD GA4

GA4 PEAK SEASON TRACKING CHECKLIST

Confirm GA4 is actually recording every order before Black Friday and holiday traffic lands

CHECKS	DO FIRST	PARTS	COST
16	4	4	Free



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An audit of eight ecommerce brands found that GA4 can silently miss a large share of real orders, in one case 66% of holiday purchases. This checklist gives you the exact places to look in GA4 and your store platform to find and fix tracking gaps before Black Friday and holiday traffic hits.

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TICK IT ON YOUR PHONE
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PART 1 OF 4 — 4 CHECKS

What changed

- [ ] 1.1

An audit of eight ecommerce brands found GA4 tracking gaps across the group

The audit was reported by Search Engine Journal covering eight ecommerce brands and found tracking problems affecting order data.

- [ ] 1.2

One retailer's GA4 missed 66% of holiday orders

For this retailer, roughly two-thirds of actual holiday purchases were not recorded in GA4, meaning reported revenue and order counts were far below actual sales.

- [ ] 1.3

The gap was found through an audit comparing GA4 data to actual order data

The discrepancy surfaced only when GA4 numbers were checked against real transaction records, not from GA4 reports alone.

- [ ] 1.4

Search Engine Journal recommends checking tracking before peak season starts

The report's advice is to audit your own GA4 setup now, before Black Friday and holiday traffic volumes make any gap more costly.

PART 2 OF 4 — 4 CHECKS

Confirm purchase events are firing correctly

- [ ] 2.1 DO FIRST

Check that the purchase event fires on the order confirmation page, not earlier

Open GA4 DebugView, place a real test order, and watch for the purchase event firing exactly once on the thank-you/confirmation page. If it fires on the checkout page before payment completes, it will count orders that never finish.

WHERE `GA4 › Admin › DebugView`

- [ ] 2.2 DO FIRST

Verify the purchase event only fires once per order

Reload or revisit the confirmation page after a test purchase and check DebugView again. If purchase fires a second time on refresh or back-button navigation, revenue will be double counted.

WHERE `GA4 › Admin › DebugView`

☐ 2.3

Check that transaction_id is present and unique on every purchase event

In DebugView, open the purchase event parameters and confirm transaction_id has a value and matches the real order number. GA4 uses this to deduplicate; a missing or blank ID can cause orders to be dropped or merged.

☐ 2.4

Confirm the value and currency parameters are populated

Check that value shows the correct order total and currency shows the right code (for example USD). A missing value means the order is recorded with zero revenue even if the event fires.

PART 3 OF 4 — 4 CHECKS

Check for conditions that cause silent order loss

☐ 3.1 DO FIRST

Test checkout on a route with a redirect to a third-party payment page and back

Place a test order that goes through PayPal, Shop Pay, Afterpay, or a similar off-site step, then confirm the purchase event still fires on return to your site. Redirect flows are a common place where tracking scripts fail to reload.

☐ 3.2

Test checkout with an ad blocker or privacy browser extension enabled

Place a test order in a browser with an ad blocker or tracking protection turned on and check whether the purchase event still reaches GA4. Some blockers stop GA4's script from loading at all, which an audit won't catch unless tested this way.

☐ 3.3

Test checkout on mobile Safari and in-app browsers (Instagram, Facebook)

Complete a test purchase using a link opened inside Instagram or Facebook's in-app browser. These environments handle cookies and scripts differently and are common sources of missed mobile orders during peak season.

☐ 3.4

Check if Enhanced Conversions or server-side tagging is set up and confirm it still matches GA4 order counts

If you use a server-side tag setup, compare order counts from the server container to GA4's reported purchases for the same day. A mismatch points to events being dropped somewhere in the pipeline.

PART 4 OF 4 — 4 CHECKS

Cross-check GA4 numbers against your real order data

- [ ] 4.1 DO FIRST

Compare distinct transaction IDs in GA4 to your store platform's order count for the same date range

Pull total orders for the last 7 and 30 days from your ecommerce platform (Shopify, WooCommerce, etc.). In GA4, count the distinct transaction IDs on purchase events for the same dates. The Ecommerce purchases report counts items, not orders, and the Transactions metric also counts refunds. A gap of more than a few percent needs investigation.

WHERE `GA4 › Explore › Free form › Transaction ID, filtered to the purchase event`

- [ ] 4.2

Compare GA4 revenue total to actual revenue for the same period

Check that total revenue in GA4 roughly matches the revenue total in your order management system. Large gaps can mean missing events, wrong currency, or values not being passed correctly.

- [ ] 4.3

Check order counts by device category for mismatches

In GA4, break down purchases by device (desktop, mobile, tablet) and compare the mobile share to what your platform reports. If mobile orders look unusually low in GA4 relative to actual mobile sales, that points to a mobile-specific tracking gap.

WHERE `GA4 › Explore › the same Free form table › add Device category`

- [ ] 4.4

Run this same comparison weekly through peak season, not just once before it starts

Set a recurring reminder to pull and compare the two numbers each week from Black Friday through the end of the holiday period, since new tracking issues can appear after a site update or promo page launch.

WANT ME TO LOOK AT YOURS?

If you have gone through this and want a second pair of eyes, book a free call. We open the account together and look at what is actually happening. No deck, no pitch.

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SOURCES

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