OPERATOR BRIEF · FREE CHECKLIST · NOVEMBER 24, 2026

Free-plan stack: official free tiers for a small shop

A practical checklist for running a very small business on official free plans — and for deciding, calmly, whether a Black Friday or Cyber Monday offer is actually worth paying for. This is not a promise of income, growth, subscribers, or results. Caps, prices, and promo rules change. Confirm every figure on the vendor's current official page before you rely on a free plan or pay for an upgrade.

We read the official pages listed at the end of this PDF on November 24, 2026 (America/New_York). We did not complete a paid checkout, and we did not run a hands-on product test for this checklist.

Published by Anthropclick LLC under the working name Operator Brief. Free to download and print for personal use. Nothing here is legal, tax, or accounting advice.

How to use this during holiday-sale week

- ☐ Write down the job first (a newsletter, a form, a simple site, invoices). A sale is not a reason to buy a tool you would not use in December.
- ☐ Stay on an official free plan when it still covers that job. A promo code does not help if you do not need to pay yet.
- ☐ If you already planned to pay, open the vendor's own sale or pricing page and read the term length — first month, first three months, first year, annual-only — before you enter a code.
- ☐ If an official page has no end date, do not treat that as unlimited time. Recheck the live page before you pay, including on Cyber Monday (November 30, 2026).
- ☐ Ignore coupon-site percentages unless the same offer also appears on the vendor's own site. If two official pages disagree, believe the checkout screen.

1. Newsletter host — pick one official free plan

You only need one host to start. These official free-plan facts were on the vendors' own pages on November 24, 2026:

beehiiv official Free (beehiiv.com/pricing FAQ): free forever, no credit card, up to 2,500 subscribers, unlimited email sends, and core newsletter, website, and podcast tools, as listed. Separate official Black Friday page: 20% off any annual plan with code BFCM2026, for one billing cycle (one year). No end date was published that day. Use the code only if you already planned to pay annually, and only after you see the discount at checkout.

Kit official Free (kit.com/pricing): $0, up to 10,000 subscribers. Official FAQ: no sending

limits on any plan. A “Monthly Black Friday offer” was also on that pricing page (50% off the first three months of monthly Creator, as worded there). Kit’s official promotions page, read the same day, said 60% off. Confirm the percentage at checkout. Both official pages said the offer ends December 1.

MailerLite official Free (mailerlite.com/pricing): $0/month, 250 subscribers, 2,500 monthly emails, plus the features named on that card (campaigns, free automations, a free landing page, a free digital product or booking, free signup forms, 2 user seats). The same pricing page stated a 14-day trial with no credit card required. Official Lite Friday sale (mailerlite.com/black-friday-deal and official terms): 26% off annual Comfort or Power with code LITEFRIDAY26, from November 17, 2026, 14:00 UTC through December 18, 2026, 16:00 UTC. Annual plans only; enter the code yourself.

- [ ] I have chosen one host, and I have re-read that host’s current official free-plan cap (subscribers and monthly sends).
- [ ] I am not paying annually just to use a holiday code if official Free still covers my list.
- [ ] I have a simple welcome email drafted. I am not buying a list, and I am only emailing people who signed up.
- [ ] If I recommend tools in the newsletter, I have a plain-language disclosure ready, and I will not invent results.
- [ ] I have checked the mailing-law requirements that apply to me, including a physical postal address where one is required, and an obvious way to unsubscribe.

2. Forms and intake

Fillout official Free (fillout.com/pricing, November 24, 2026): $0/month forever, unlimited forms, unlimited seats, and 1,000 responses per month, plus the core features listed on that page. There was no official Black Friday or Cyber Monday sale on Fillout’s homepage or pricing page that day (fillout.com/black-friday returned 404).

- [ ] I only need a form or intake sheet, and official Free’s monthly response cap covers that volume.
- [ ] I have tested one form on a personal email before I send it to a client or a reader.
- [ ] I am not paying for a form tool this week unless I already need a paid cap or a paid feature the official free plan does not list.

3. Funnels, courses, or an all-in-one account — only if you actually need one

Many solo shops do not need a funnel platform in the first month. If you do, systeme.io’s official pricing FAQ (re-read November 24, 2026; the FAQ was marked last updated April 2026) describes a free plan that never expires and does not require a credit card, with up to 2,000 contacts, 3 sales funnels, 1 course, and other listed caps. Annual billing was listed as “2 months free,” which is a standing offer, not a holiday code. There was no official Black Friday or Cyber Monday sale on systeme.io’s homepage or pricing page that day (systeme.io/black-friday returned 404). We did not treat partner subdomains as official

systeme.io promotions.

- ☐ I can name the specific job (a course, a simple funnel, or email plus a page) that an all-in-one account would do.
- ☐ I have read the current official free-plan caps, including contact, funnel, and course limits.
- ☐ I will not force a newsletter-only job onto an all-in-one platform, or the other way around, just because it is sale week.

4. A simple website or workspace

Official starting points, read November 24, 2026: Wix's official plans page says creating a website is free; a Premium plan is what adds a custom domain and removes Wix branding, among other listed features, with a 14-day refund window on an initial Premium upgrade. Webflow's official pricing page listed a Free Starter plan (a webflow.io domain, limited CMS, 2 static pages, 1 GB bandwidth, 50 form submissions, and other starter features as listed), with a standing "Yearly (Save up to 40%)" billing toggle that is not a holiday sale. Squarespace's official pricing page said it does not offer a free plan; every site starts with a 14-day free trial and no credit card required, and annual billing was listed as saving up to 36%. Its official coupons page published GIMME10 for 10% off an annual website plan on a first purchase only — a standing official code, not labeled Black Friday. Notion's official pricing page listed Free at $0 per member per month, with no holiday sale wording.

Wix's plans page also showed a "Save 50%" label on some yearly Premium cards, without calling it Black Friday or Cyber Monday. Confirm any saving and the billing term at checkout; we are not treating that unlabeled text as a verified holiday sale. Shopify's official pricing page listed a 3-day free trial, then $1/month for 3 months, then standard pricing; that page did not label the intro offer as a holiday sale. Budget the regular price that follows the intro months if you open a store.

- ☐ I know whether I need a public website this month, or whether a newsletter host's official site tools or a Notion page would do.
- ☐ I have read the current official free or trial caps (pages, bandwidth, forms, domain) before I publish anything important.
- ☐ I will not pay for a year of a website builder only to use a holiday or promo code if a free or trial option still covers the job.

5. Design and writing assistants — pay only for a job you already have

Canva's official pricing page on November 24, 2026 described 50% off the first three calendar months of monthly Canva Pro or Business, applied automatically, for new subscriptions in select countries (not China or Brazil), not combinable with a free trial, and not valid if you had Pro, Pro Lite, or Business in the past 30 days. The page did not call this Black Friday and published no end date. A three-month monthly discount can still cost more over a full year than an undiscounted annual plan — do the arithmetic on the live prices.

Grammarly's official Black Friday page offered 50% off Grammarly Pro for the first term only,

then the regular price unless you cancel. It is a limited-time offer with no calendar end date published on that page. It cannot be combined with other discounts or a free trial. Enterprise is not included.

Jasper's official pricing page listed Pro at $59/month billed yearly or $69/month billed monthly, with a 7-day Pro trial, and no Black Friday or Cyber Monday sale. Notion's official Free plan, above, already includes a trial of Notion AI as listed — that is not a holiday offer.

- ☐ I can name the specific design or writing job I would use a paid plan for in the next three months.
- ☐ If I use a short-term monthly discount, I have compared its first-year cost with the official annual price on the same day.
- ☐ I will recheck any offer that has no published end date before I pay.

6. A calm holiday-season newsletter plan (optional)

This section is a planning list, not a growth promise. Sending fewer, clearer issues is enough.

- ☐ I have outlined three or four possible issues (for example: what I actually use, a tool I am skipping, a process I follow, or a dated official-plan note). I will not invent case studies or results.
- ☐ I have scheduled sends around my own time off, and I am not writing from an empty well on a sale deadline.
- ☐ Every issue has a single job: one idea, one next step, and a way to reply or unsubscribe.
- ☐ If I include a product link I benefit from, the issue will say so in plain language.
- ☐ I will not claim that a free plan or a holiday code will make money, grow a list, or replace staff.

Official pages we read on November 24, 2026

beehiiv.com/black-friday and beehiiv.com/pricing; kit.com/pricing and kit.com/promotions; mailerlite.com/black-friday-deal, mailerlite.com/legal/bfcm-terms, and mailerlite.com/pricing; canva.com/pricing; grammarly.com/black-friday; notion.com/pricing; shopify.com/pricing; squarespace.com/pricing and squarespace.com/coupons; wix.com/plans; webflow.com/pricing; jasper.ai/pricing; systeme.io/pricing; fillout.com/pricing.

For the full dated wording, including conflicts we would not resolve by invention (notably Kit's two official pages), read the Operator Brief guides at operator-brief-711.pages.dev/guides/black-friday-tools-2026/, /guides/cyber-monday-software-2026/, and /guides/black-friday-freelancers-2026/. This checklist lives at /free-checklist/. The Operator Brief newsletter is free to subscribe at adams-newsletter-52b2b0.beehiiv.com/subscribe.

Operator Brief is published by Anthropclick LLC. Some guides on the site include disclosed affiliate links for beehiiv, systeme.io, and Fillout; if you buy after clicking those links, Anthropclick LLC may earn a commission. This PDF is a free editorial checklist. It is not a deal blast and not an offer of professional advice. Confirm live official pages before you pay.