

The adventure of BlackFriday(s)

with Sylius-powered eCommerce platforms

Where's Joachim?



Let's give him a shoutout for the awesome work he's been doing and the tremendous value he brought to the Sylius Community!



Who am I?

Software Product Owner since 2013

Working with Sylius since 2015

Symfony Meetup organizer in Bucharest

Freelancing





What's a „Black Friday”?

Shopping event

Originally from US - the Friday after Thanksgiving (4th week of Nov)

Used by sellers to clear stocks and make room for next season

Used by buyers to purchase discounted products and gifts for the upcoming holiday season

Was made a big thing in Romania by eMAG in 2011



People will *literally* fight to buy from you

Before Sylius

2Performant - affiliate marketing network

15x times more sales than a normal day

The event made it on the news





Access logs during BlackFriday (~321 requests per second)

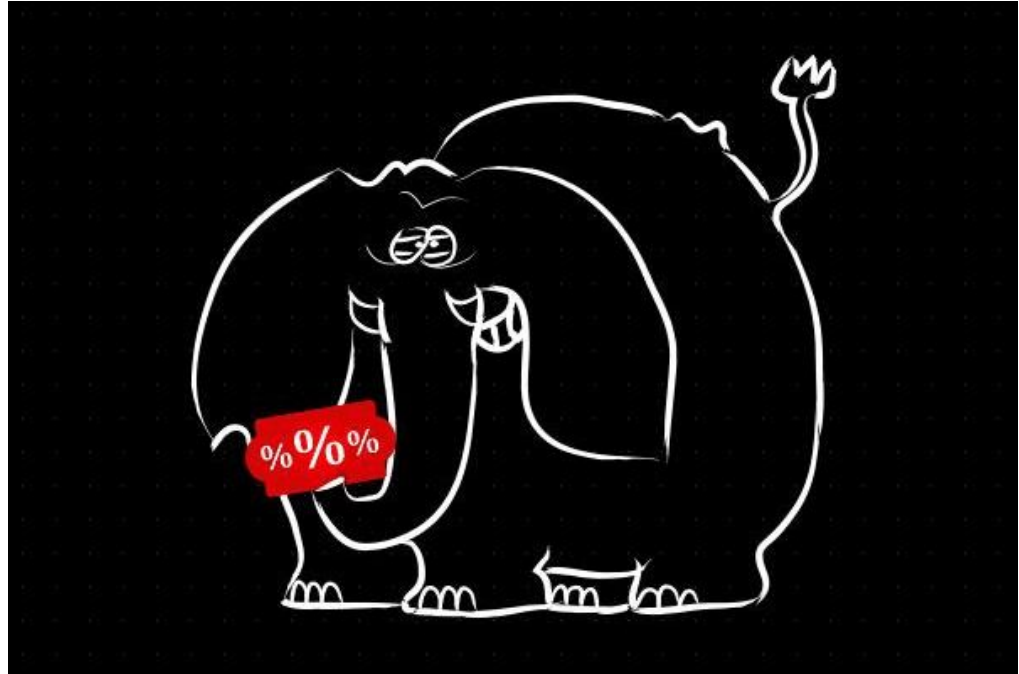
Before Sylius

Elefant.ro in 2014

Custom made PHP platform

Website crashed multiple times showing a funny image of an elephant scared by a mouse

But the business was somehow happy with the end results.





Before Sylius - key takeaways

1. You will need a trimmed version of the website to take the load
2. If you get a mention on TV in primetime, you struck gold
3. Or your website will crash
4. Cron Jobs are a bad pattern to make things async - go for queues
5. Downstream systems matter as much as the frontend - especially after BlackFriday
6. BlackFriday is not over until you have shipped all orders
7. Unexpected stuff might happen: the deployment tool broke right before we did our last deploy and had to manually SFTP all files

First Sylius iteration

Started working for BestValue.eu in 2015

The eCommerce platform for duty free shops in Romania

Started on Sylius 0.14 and upgraded till Sylius 0.19

Recently migrated to Sylius 1.10





First Black Friday key visual for BestValue



BlackFriday with Sylius

- Teasing mechanism - subscribe to email and get access earlier
- Created a lightweight version of the website as a front landing page
- Had multiple starting dates:
 - For subscribers
 - For regulars
- Used BlackFire to profile the sh*t of our application
- Used Locust.io as a load testing software to simulate user behaviour
- Leveraged the cloud infrastructure aka „throw hardware into the problem”



BlackFriday with Sylius - key takeaways

1. Never ever tell the exact time when you are going to start
2. It's never too early to start working on this - January is a good month (if the event is in November)
3. Sylius & Symfony were very flexible to accommodate complex business cases
4. Save data for the next iterations: screenshots, access logs, metrics - everything will be useful next time



Sylius pain points

1. Sylius Order Number
2. Sylius Promotion Usages
3. Sylius Stock Management
4. Adjustments increase the no. of writes
5. Managing payment status - callbacks from payment service providers often arrive before customers reach order confirmation page
6. HTTP Cache or Object caching is not embedded in the platform



Software Toolkit

1. Solid eCommerce platform - Sylius
2. Cloud infrastructure + a deep pocket - Google Cloud
3. Profiling tool - Blackfire
4. APM - New Relic
5. Logs - ELK
6. Infrastructure metrics - Grafana, InfluxDB, Thanos
7. Load testing framework - Locust or K6
8. Business metrics - Metabase



Other takeaways

- Can't stress enough the use of a cross functional timeline with a checklist
- Consider a code freeze
- Ensure the billing for SaaS is up to date and ready to accommodate spikes in usage
- Make key business metrics visible
- Do a pre-mortem
- Talk to your vendors and tell them what to expect

Deadline	Task	Owner	Status
9 noiembrie (Miercuri)			
	Confirmare texte, poze, imagini de BlackFriday pe STG	Alex	Done
	Deploy final pe PROD + code freeze	Victor	Done
10 noiembrie (Joi)			
10:00	Pauză cod de conversie în Tag Manager	Gabi	Done
12:00	Reconfigurare priorități transferuri între depozite (NAV) ca să nu mai luăm marfă din Magazine	Vlad	
15:00	Website down - "Ne pregătim de Black Friday" cortina 1 Activat mecanism de BlackFriday în admin pentru interior	Victor & Bunnyshele	Done

Sample timeline checklist




BS-3331

Make a great Black Friday

[Comment](#)[Agile Board](#)[More ▾](#)[Reopen Issue](#)[Admin ▾](#)

Details

Type:  StoryStatus: **CLOSED** ([View Workflow](#))Priority:  Blocker

Resolution: Done

Component/s: [DeveloperExperience](#)

Fix Version/s: None

Labels: None


Epic Link: **Black Friday 17**

Sprint: Sprint 90

Description

In order to be awesome,
As a product owner,
I need an awesome BestValue available during Black Friday.

Criteria of acceptance:

1. de-activate cronjobs to avoid overlapping with peak traffic
2. the website should be up & running
3. the team should have fun
4. we should learn great stuff regarding scaling our website
5. we should have  on our website

Notes:

optionally,  can install Bomberman on a server - see [BS-2684](#)

Always open a JIRA ticket for BlackFriday activity



Non-conventional takeaways

1. Be open minded about solutions - like moving the event start date!
2. Ensure people are available during BlackFriday and they don't have planned time off
3. Expect to pull an all nighter
4. Bring a spare T-Shirt
5. And deodorant; funny slippers are never a bad idea - pijamas might be too much though
6. Expect the unexpected
 - a. Internet going down
 - b. The SaaS you are relying on crashes because everyone is using it at 150%
 - c. Bus factor is a real thing
7. KISS - Keep it stupid simple; just because you can, doesn't mean you should



Wrap up

Share your experiences

We can work together next year

(planning, testing and coordinating) - reach out 😊

