

The Cosmetic Makers Production Schedule

Black Friday and the festive gifting season is just around the corner, and if you are a small business owner, or wanting to sell your products to make some extra money, then you will probably be starting to prepare for it! It's an excellent opportunity to give your buyers amazing deals and promote your brand.

If you're a newbie, we've got our [Business Blog](#) as a great guide to the whole process (and hopefully you've read it!), but we thought we'd go a bit more in-depth on the cosmetic makers' production schedule for exciting times like the festive season. We want you to be ready and prepared - so let's dive in!

Product Making Times

As a product maker, you need to be aware of how long your products take to make and settle or cure. In South Africa where we have loadshedding, you may even need to plan additional time for your manufacturing process so it doesn't get interrupted.

Soaps (cold process): manufacture time + allow at least 8 weeks or more for curing time.

Bath bombs, bath salts, whipped soap, creams/lotions, sprays, hair products, serums, candles, etc: allow 2-3 weeks minimum. This gives the product time to settle, and gives you a chance to test and observe (and make any changes if required).

We advise against leaving your product making to the last minute. Give yourself time to order all your ingredients, packaging and labels (which are often in short supply at this time of the year - because guess what, everyone else is also prepping!). Giving yourself plenty of time will make for a less stressful festive season.

6 Weeks to Black Friday

Finalise your formula testing to make sure your products will be perfect!

You've got your product concept, but you may need to go through quite a bit of product testing to get it juuuust right. You want to present a great product that will attract buyers and sales. So make sure you've thought every aspect through, particularly how your product feels and behaves.

Decide on your batch sizes.

You'll likely want to make your products in batches, as this is more efficient than making them one by one. Are you doing markets/bazaars, selling online, in physical stores, or have stockists? Think about the quantities of your product that you'll need to make in order to ensure you will have enough stock. It's always better to be overprepared with stock - you can always sell excess stock, but you will be under pressure if you don't have enough!

5 Weeks to Black Friday

Ingredient checklist, and prep any unique ingredients such as your own extracts.

Once you've finalised your product formula and decided on the quantities of your product needed, make sure you have enough [ingredients](#) to cover yourself. As the year winds down, many suppliers are taking careful inventory of their stocks (us included), because their customers are busy. So make sure to get your supplier orders in in good time to avoid delays and disappointments around ingredients.

If you're making your products unique with something like [botanical extracts](#), keep in mind that these may take weeks to produce. But botanical extracts do add exceptional value, like colours, therapeutics and active benefits, so it's well worth the extra time and effort!

Equipment checklist:

Check that you have all the equipment needed to make your products. The right equipment can really make your job so much easier, and I can recommend, from personal experience, that you don't skimp on this part.

[Equipment](#) you may require:

[Beakers, thermometer, spatulas, pipettes, measuring glasses, pH test strips](#)

[Safety equipment](#)

[Candle wicks](#)

[Molds](#)

Packaging checklist:

Ensure you have enough packaging to put all your product in. Packaging is extremely important, and will definitely be something that your customer notices. As with your ingredients, make sure to get your packaging orders in in good time as well. At this time of year packaging supplies are always under pressure, and you don't want to be at the back of the queue.

Packaging items: [Aluminium tins and bottles](#), [glass bottles](#), [glass jars](#), [paper pouches](#).

[Accessories](#) you may need: [biodegradable cling wrap](#), [scoops](#), [twine](#), paper bags and other accessories.

Costing your product

Once you have all your ingredients, equipment and packaging, you should have an idea of how to cost and price your product. Costing is really important as it informs you how much it costs to produce your product, and in turn what you can sell your product for.

To cost your product, work out how much of each ingredient you are using per unit, and then how much that bit of ingredient costs. Tally all your ingredient costs up, then add a fee for your equipment, time and other resources such as water/electricity, and you will be able to tell how much a unit of product really costs you.

We've created this [free downloadable formulating and costing tool](#) to help.

3-4 Weeks to Black Friday

It's time to make your product!

Unless you have a very time sensitive product like baked goods, round about now is a good time to actually make your products as they will have plenty of time to settle, and if you pick up on any issues there is still time to fix them. If you're making soaps then you will have already made them weeks ago and they will be curing nicely.

Once you have made a batch of product, it's a good idea to test it for stability. This step is often overlooked, but when you're selling to the public, your product needs to withstand

a range of factors such as transportation in warm cars or hot courier trucks, standing on shelves, moist bathrooms, fingers going in, etc. Take a few weeks to test your product by putting it through all the things that it might go through during its journey to your customer and beyond. It might save you stress later on. We go into more detail on stability testing in [Part 3: Beauty Care Production](#).

Make sure you have all your labels ready for when you need to label your products.

3 Weeks to Black Friday

With just weeks to go before your sale, you need to get your brand and product out there and in front of potential customers! You will need to advertise/market your product. Do product photography or videos, get reviews from friends/family who may have tested your product out already, and make sure you are visible on social media platforms.

If people don't know about you, they can't buy from you!

If you're planning on doing any markets, make sure your place is secured.

Decide on any special promotions, and start to advertise these.

1 Week to Black Friday

It's time to set up for sale!

Check everything works properly: test your website (if you have one), phone line and emails. Have your Facebook and Instagram set up nicely, and schedule your social media posts and advertising.

Have all your promotions and marketing in place.

Make sure your products are labeled and packaged, and get them to any stockists ahead of time.

Enjoy the sales season because you're so well prepared!