umbraco

Ready for Black Friday?

A Practical Playbook To Help You Prepare Your Digital Experience Platform For Scale, Speed, And Success

Executive Summary

Why Digital Readiness Is The Real Black Friday Advantage

Black Friday has evolved. What was once a marketing milestone is now a mission-critical test of your digital infrastructure, commerce engine, and customer experience. The winners operate with confidence – not because of luck, but because they've prepared to scale.

A slow site? Lost revenue.
A broken checkout? Lost trust.
A generic experience? Lost customers.

This guide gives CMOs, CTOs, CDOs, and digital leaders a practical roadmap to prepare, execute, and learn. It blends board-level strategy with hands-on, developer-grade practices and shows how to use Umbraco Cloud, Umbraco Commerce, and Umbraco Engage to deliver speed, stability, and measurable impact, while keeping costs predictable and under control.

Inside, you'll learn how to:

- Prepare your platform and hosting for elastic scale.

- Optimize conversions with streamlined checkout, flexible promotions, and real-time merchandising.

- Empower marketing to move fast with server-side analytics, A/B testing, and personalization rooted in first-party data.

Mats Persson,
CEO, Umbraco

The Trends of Black Friday

What started as a single-day discount event has evolved into a global shopping season with new patterns of behavior, higher expectations, and bigger risks for brands that fail to adapt.

Here are the five trends shaping Black Friday in 2025:

1. **From Black Friday to Black November**
   Black Friday is no longer a day. It's a season. Retailers now roll out deals earlier to capture share and spread demand. As this trend has accelerated year after year, consumers have come to expect discounts and offers well before the Friday itself.

   Why it matters: Enterprises need to be ready for sustained load, longer campaign cycles, and the agility to adapt offers week-to-week, not just day-of.

2. **Mobile-First, Checkout-First**
   It's not news that mobile-first is dominating traffic. What's changing is the conversion gap. The 2024 holiday season was the most mobile of all time, with smartphones driving 54.5% of online purchases.[1]

   Why it matters: Black Friday success now hinges on optimizing the mobile checkout flow. Every friction point at checkout translates directly into abandoned carts.

[1] Adobe. "Holiday Shopping Season Drove a Record $241.4 Billion Online and Rising 8.7% YoY." BusinessWire, January 7, 2025.

3. **Personalization Is the New Price Cut**

   Discounts may draw people in, but relevance converts them. We live in a Netflix-era, where people expect the digital experiences they consume to adapt instantly to their preferences. In a 2025 global study, 90% of consumers say they'd like more personalized communications, while 77% say relevant product recommendations drive their purchase decisions.[2]

   Why it matters: In the Netflix-era, customers won't settle for generic. Without personalization, brands waste ad spend and lose loyalty at the very moment customers are most open to switching.

4. **Downtime Equals Damage**

   Downtime has always hurt revenue, but today it also damages reputation. Customers can switch brands with a single click, and they aren't afraid to do it.

   Why it matters: Reliability is now a brand trust issue, not just a technical KPI. If your site fails on Black Friday, customers won't just leave. Many won't return.

5. **New Customers, New Opportunity**

   Black Friday attracts more first-time buyers than any other shopping period. A recent study of 29,000 brands found that 59.71% of all purchases during Black Friday and Cyber Monday in 2024 were made by new customers.[3]

   Why it matters: Retention after Black Friday is just as important as sales on the day. Enterprises that nurture new customers with tools like Umbraco Engage can turn deal hunters into long-term loyalists.

[2] BusinessWire, "New Global Study Reveals Consumers Demand More Personalization," 2025.
[3] TripleWhale. "BFCM 2024 Advertising Guide: BFCM by the Numbers." TripleWhale Blog. August 2025.

6 Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

Every year, Black Friday puts e-commerce businesses to the test. With surging demand, heightened competition, and shoppers expecting flawless digital experiences, even the smallest misstep can cost revenue and reputation.

At Umbraco, we have seen that many of these challenges are connected to how content and digital experiences are delivered. Below are six of the most common pitfalls organizations face, and how the right CMS approach can turn them into opportunities.

1. **Website Performance and Scalability**

   ⚠ *The pitfall:* Traffic surges can push websites beyond their limits, causing slowdowns or outages. Even a short disruption at checkout can drive customers away.

   ♀ *The solution:* A CMS with CDN support and cloud scalability ensures that content remains fast and available. With Umbraco, features such as image optimization and the ability to scale resources give teams confidence that their site can handle peak demand.

2. **Content and Campaign Readiness**

   ⚠ *The pitfall:* Marketing teams often scramble to update offers manually, which leads to delays, mistakes, and inconsistent promotions across markets.

   ♀ *The solution:* Agile workflows, scheduling tools, and personalization make it possible to prepare campaigns in advance, adapt them in real time, and launch promotions exactly when they are needed. With Umbraco's marketer-friendly CMS and enterprise add-ons such as Umbraco Workflow, marketing teams gain governance and approval flows that let them move quickly without depending on developers.

3. **Seamless Checkout and Integrations**

   ⚠ *The pitfall:* Friction at checkout, whether from missing payment options or complicated flows, causes shoppers to abandon their baskets at the worst moment.

   ♀ *The solution:* A CMS with an API-first architecture makes it easy to connect with the right commerce and payment systems. With Umbraco Commerce, organizations can integrate smoothly with payment providers, ERP, or PIM platforms. This setup gives teams control over the checkout flow and ensures that content, products, and promotions work together seamlessly across systems from discovery through to purchase.

4. **Security and Compliance**

   ⚠ *The pitfall:* Black Friday attracts fraud and cyberattacks, and a single breach can damage customer trust permanently.

   ♀ *The solution:* Enterprise-grade security features such as role-based permissions, audit trails, SSL, and compliance certifications protect both brand and buyer. On Umbraco Cloud, ISO-certified Azure hosting, automatic updates, as well as a host of built-in security features, reduce risk and maintain compliance even during periods of extreme pressure.

5. **Customer Support Content**

   ⚠ *The pitfall:* Support teams are overwhelmed with repetitive inquiries about shipping, returns, or promotions, leading to long response times and frustrated customers.

   ♀ *The solution:* Intuitive editing and publishing workflows in Umbraco make it easy to provide up-to-date FAQs, knowledge bases, and real-time updates across websites, chatbots, and help centers. Customers receive consistent answers wherever they ask, and support teams can focus on higher-value cases.

6. **Campaign Consistency Across Channels**

   ⚠ *The pitfall:* Shoppers encounter mismatched offers and promotions across email, ads, and the website. This inconsistency creates confusion and reduces trust.

   ♀ *The solution:* Centralizing campaign content ensures one source of truth. With Umbraco's multilingual features and delivery APIs, organizations can publish consistent messages across every channel and market.

Data Protection & Compliance Under Stress

With record-breaking traffic and fraud attempts during Black Friday, protecting trust is as critical as protecting transactions. The same peak traffic that stresses infrastructure also creates opportunities for fraud, breaches, and compliance slip-ups.

Attackers exploit traffic surges to disguise malicious activity. Checkout systems are prime targets for fraud and data theft. Regulatory oversight is tightening: GDPR, PCI-DSS, and evolving local rules require watertight compliance.

How Umbraco Keeps You Protected

- **Enterprise-Grade Security by Default** → Umbraco Cloud is hosted on Microsoft Azure with TLS encryption and continuous patching.

- **Governance & Permissions** → Role-based access, audit trails, and approval workflows keep teams compliant even under pressure.

- **Privacy-First Personalization** → Umbraco Engage is built on first-party data, ensuring GDPR alignment without third-party tracking risks.

- **Peace of Mind During Spikes** → Automated updates, monitoring, and backups reduce the human error that often creeps in under stress.

On Black Friday, your platform isn't just powering transactions. It's safeguarding trust. With Umbraco, security and compliance scale as easily as your campaigns.

What's at Stake?

When Black Friday goes wrong, it's rarely because marketing lacked ideas. It's because the platform, process, or team readiness wasn't there.

If you're not ready, you risk:

- Brand trust

- Marketing ROI

- Operational resilience

- Customer loyalty

53%	**70%**	**64%**
of mobile site visitors leave a page that takes longer than three seconds to load.[4]	of consumers say they will abandon a brand after just two negative experiences; nearly a quarter will stop purchasing from a brand after just one.[5]	are less likely to trust a business after experiencing a website crash.[6]

Why Umbraco for readiness?
Open, flexible, and enterprise-ready on .NET with a community and product roadmap designed to deliver speed to market, security, and ROI without vendor lock-in.

[4] Google. Find out how you stack up to new industry benchmarks for mobile page speed. Think with Google, 2023.
[5] Emplifi. "70% of Consumers Will Abandon a Brand After Just Two Negative Experiences." Emplifi Press Release, January 2025.
[6] Queue-It. "Consumer Trust Statistics: The Age of Online Trust." Queue-It Blog, 2024.

Is Your Team Ready?

Commercial Checklist

- ☐ **Plan campaigns early**
  Decide early on what types of campaigns you'll run (time-limited offers, bonus discounts, loyalty deals, omnichannel incentives).

- ☐ **Match ambition to execution**
  Align with technical teams to confirm campaigns are feasible in the CMS and commerce setup.

- ☐ **Test campaign types**
  Trial run your biggest promotions before (e.g., flash sales, limited inventory drops) to see how customers and your systems react.

- ☐ **Set pricing strategies**
  Use pre-tests to find the "sweet spot" discount level that increases order size without destroying margins.

- ☐ **Plan product strategy**
  Define which products drive traffic, which clear stock, and which improve margin.

- ☐ **Stay compliant**
  Be mindful of changing rules for price marketing and discounts across markets.

Technical Checklist

- ☐ **Start development early**
  Don't wait. Implement new features and integrations months in advance so they can be tested thoroughly.

- ☐ **Load test environments**
  Test traffic levels at least 50% higher than last year's peak to stay safe.

- ☐ **Trim unnecessary scripts**
  Remove non-critical third-party scripts that slow load times and increase bandwidth demand.

- ☐ **Test campaign mechanics**
  Validate discount logic, time-limited promotions, and cart flows in staging.

- ☐ **Scale infrastructure**
  Increase server capacity, resources, and caching setups to handle forecast traffic.

- ☐ **Coordinate campaigns with IT**
  Avoid sending the biggest email pushes during expected traffic spikes to balance load unless you are sure that your site can handle the traffic.

- ☐ **Get your cookie consent in order**
  Make sure to get consent to be able to personalize and A/B test your content
  (see step 1 under Page 12 – Real-Time Engagement with Umbraco Engage)

The most successful brands start in summer, test in autumn, and enter November with confidence.

Umbraco Cloud as the Backbone of Black Friday

Black Friday is a stress test for digital infrastructure. Traffic is unpredictable, downtime is costly, and customers expect flawless performance (even at ten times the usual load).

Umbraco Cloud is built for these moments. Running on Microsoft Azure, it provides resource scalability, automation, and security. All is maintained by the people who built the CMS. On Black Friday, that means your site doesn't just survive spikes. It stays fast, stable, and reliable.

Safe staging and environment synchronization tools let teams rehearse campaigns, validate discount logic, and roll out promotions with rollback options always in place.

With built-in monitoring, logging, and backup features, Umbraco Cloud becomes more than hosting. Automated upgrades and patching keep your environment secure without last-minute scrambling. It's your operational safety net when performance and reputation are on the line.

For big events, speed is key, and that means caching is critical.
Without it, even powerful infrastructure will fail. That's why
Umbraco Cloud includes intelligent CDN and caching options
that complement the tools already available in Umbraco CMS.
All to help you provide a stable and performant content delivery.

Black Friday with Umbraco Cloud means:

- Resource scaling, built-in caching, and global CDN
  performance.

- Regional hosting options for performance and
  governance

- Secure, up-to-date infrastructure, along with automated
  and opt-in tools to handle malicious traffic (Web
  Application Firewall, DDOS protection, Managed
  Challenges, and more).

- Confidence that your site can withstand not just Friday,
  but the extended "Black November" season.

Learn more ↗

From Shared To Dedicated Hosting
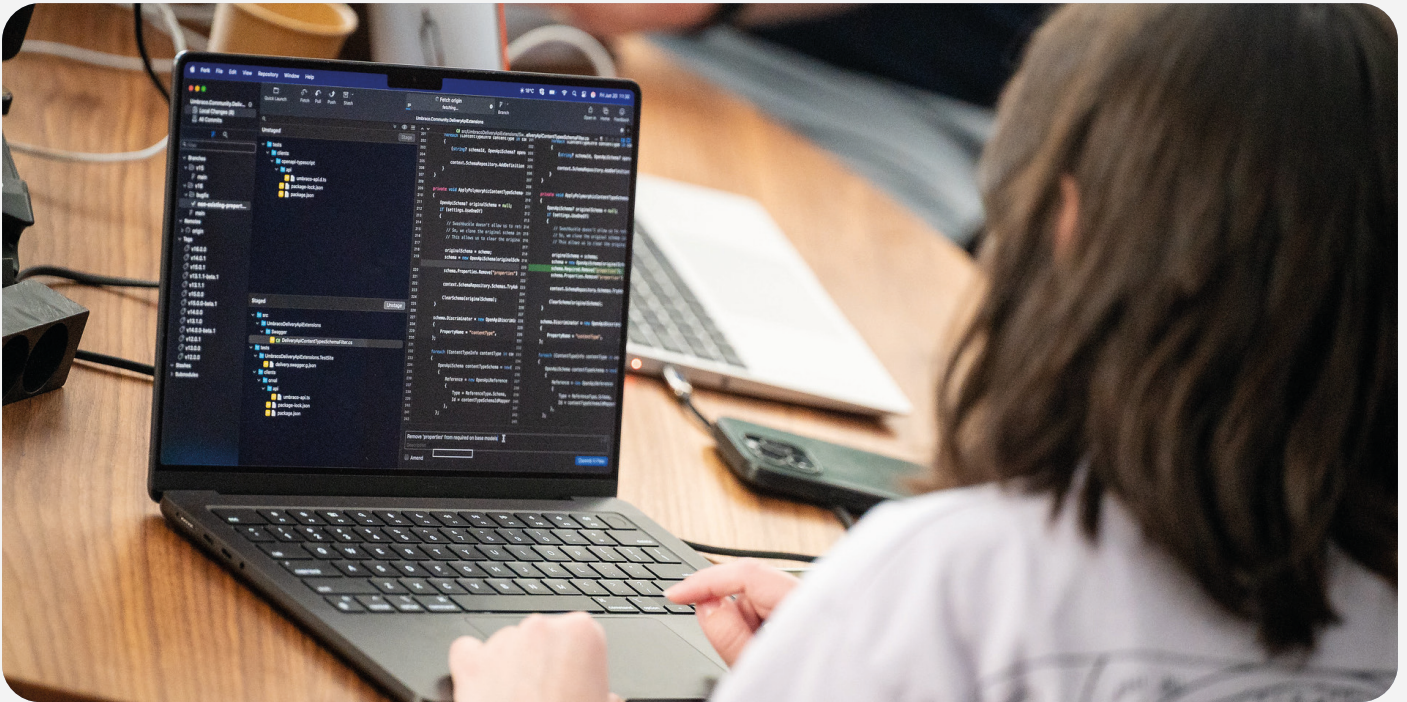
Shared hosting can work well for everyday operations. For high-stakes moments such as major launches, seasonal spikes, or Black Friday, dedicated infrastructure reduces variance and increases control.

Dedicated Resources is the Umbraco Cloud upgrade that gives you isolated, dedicated hosting for predictable performance under load. Instead of sharing infrastructure, your environment is reserved, tuned, and reinforced for the moments that matter most.

Consistent performance
No "noisy neighbors." Your site isn't slowed down by other projects on shared infrastructure.

Reduced downtime risk
Extra capacity ensures smooth handling of unexpected spikes in traffic.

Scalable on demand
Scale up instantly ahead of a campaign, and scale back when traffic subsides, keeping costs predictable.

For everyday operations, shared hosting is often enough. But when the stakes are highest, Dedicated Resources ensures your digital storefront stays open, fast, and resilient.

Learn more ↗

Reducing Load Time: Every Second Counts

On Black Friday, speed directly impacts sales. The faster your site loads, the more customers complete their purchases, and the less strain is placed on your infrastructure. Reducing load time is not just a technical tweak. It is a resilience strategy and a competitive edge.

When a page loads slowly[7]:

45.4% of shoppers are less likely to make a purchase.	**36.8%** of shoppers are less likely to return.	**11.9%** are likely to tell a friend.

Here are practical steps to keep your site lightning-fast when traffic surges:

1. **Leverage caching and CDN**
   Caching is the first line of defense against a heavy load. A global CDN delivers assets close to customers, while smart caching rules keep content responsive. Because Umbraco always runs on the latest version of .NET, you benefit from Microsoft's most advanced caching techniques. HybridCache and lazy-loaded content cache ensure fast delivery even under extreme pressure.

2. **Trim third-party scripts**
   Analytics tags, widgets, and other external scripts can add significant weight. Remove or defer anything that does not directly contribute to conversions.

3. **Compress and optimize assets**
   Large images, videos, and bloated CSS or JavaScript files slow pages down. Compress assets, use modern formats, and deliver media adaptively based on device.

4. **Prioritize mobile performance**
   Mobile users dominate traffic, and their patience is shortest. Test mobile performance separately and streamline checkout flows for small screens.

5. **Use CI/CD to test continuously**
   Integrate performance audits and load testing into your deployment workflow. Identify slowdowns before campaigns go live and fine-tune caching strategies early.

By treating speed as a strategic priority, brands can maximize conversions and safeguard infrastructure even during extreme peaks.

---

[7] Queue-It. "93 Powerful Ecommerce Site Speed Statistics for 2025." Queue-It Blog, 2 September 2025.

Delivering Conversions with Umbraco Commerce

Every friction point, from a slow-loading product page to a failed payment, translates into lost revenue and lost customers. Umbraco Commerce keeps the buying process fast and flexible, giving your teams the control they need to handle peak demand without disruption.

Built for Black Friday Performance

Resilient checkout flow → streamline steps, reduce friction, and integrate with trusted payment providers like Stripe, PayPal, and Klarna.

Flexible promotions & discount logic → support bundles, tiered pricing, multi-market and multi-currency rules, and campaign-specific offers without custom code.

Integration ready → connect seamlessly with ERP, CRM, PIM, and fulfillment systems to keep operations flowing during peak demand.

Operational control → give teams real-time visibility into orders, promotions, and inventory, with the ability to update campaigns directly in the CMS.

Learn more ↗

Commerce + Engage = The Conversion Power Duo You Didn't Know You Needed

Black Friday isn't just about traffic. It's about turning that traffic into sales. By combining Umbraco Commerce with Umbraco Engage, you can:

- Run **A/B tests** on promotions, pricing, and product placement in real time.

- Deliver **personalized upsells and recommendations** server-side without slowing down the experience.

- Use first-party data to **adapt offers on the fly**, ensuring relevance even under high load.

- Personalize product titles, descriptions, and images for Black Friday.

  - **Add urgency badge**
    "Black Friday Deal," countdown icons, or "Today Only."

  - **Show the savings clearly**
    Percentage or € discount inside the image.

  - **Dark theme with strong contrast**
    Black/red/gold pops out and signals "big sale."

Real-Time Engagement with Umbraco Engage

Umbraco Engage equips marketers to act in real time:

- **Personalize instantly** with server-side targeting that tailors content and offers without slowing down performance.

- **Experiment quickly** by running A/B and multivariate tests in minutes, then automatically promoting winning campaigns.

- **Trust the data** with server-side analytics that deliver accurate insights unaffected by ad blockers or sampling errors.

- **Protect customer privacy** through a first-party data foundation that ensures GDPR compliance without reliance on third-party tracking.

On Black Friday, the challenge is not just attracting traffic, but converting it. Every visitor is a potential sale, but only if the experience feels relevant, fast, and personalized. Engage helps teams adapt as quickly as customer behavior changes, while IT and compliance teams stay confident in security and governance.

Learn more ↗

Practical steps for Black Friday:

Step 1

Be cookie consent ready for Black Friday

On Black Friday, many visitors are first-timers, and you only get one chance. Personalization requires consent, so ensure your cookie bar is clear, visible, and blocking enough to prompt action. Once consent is given, reload the page automatically and remove the banner to enable a seamless, personalized experience. This is the only proper way to activate personalization compliantly.

Step 2

Personalize more than just the landing page

Parse UTM values or campaign parameters to understand what drew the visitor in, and make sure the first impression matches their intent. If an ad promised brownies, don't show donuts – show the brownies with consistent messaging in your hero. If they don't convert immediately, reinforce with subtle persuasion signals: social proof, reviews, or limited-time offers that keep them engaged as they explore.

Step 3

Apply discounts directly to your pricing

Visitors don't come in to do math – they come for deals. Always display the final discounted price and the savings clearly. Use personalization to adjust format for impact: absolute discounts (e.g., "Save $49") feel concrete for returning visitors who know the base price; percentages (e.g., "Save 55%") sound bigger and work well for new visitors. In some cases, show both, but vary the order based on audience type.

What to do after Black Friday

Black Friday may end at midnight, but your opportunity doesn't. The days and weeks after peak trading are when smart brands turn one-time buyers into long-term customers. And the data you capture in Umbraco Engage is the foundation for that growth.

1. Run a Post-Mortem With Real Data

→ Don't just review sales. Analyze Engage reports to see which segments converted, which content variants won, and where customers dropped off.

→ Use this insight to refine campaigns, checkout flows, and personalization strategies for next year.

2. Nurture New Customers

→ Many Black Friday shoppers are first-time visitors. Segment them in Engage ("first purchase," "high basket value," "deal hunter") and design journeys to bring them back.

→ Simple post-purchase flows — thank-you messages, loyalty rewards, personalized recommendations — turn a one-time deal into repeat business.

3. Re-Engage Abandoned Carts

→ Cart abandonments spike on Black Friday. Use Engage data to identify these customers and retarget them with personalized offers or reminders.

→ Prioritize high-value carts or repeat abandoners for maximum ROI.

4. Apply Learnings Across Content & Commerce

→ Feed Engage test results into evergreen marketing: use winning headlines, layouts, and offers beyond Black Friday.

→ Adapt Umbraco Commerce promotions and catalog logic based on real customer behavior.

5. Build an Evergreen Playbook

→ Turn your Black Friday runbook into a reusable template for other high-traffic events: product launches, seasonal campaigns, and holiday sales.

→ Include Engage insights so future campaigns are backed by tested, data-driven strategies.

Build Only What You Need

Traditional DXPs force you into all-in-one suites. You pay for features you don't use and get locked into rigid roadmaps. That model is breaking under the pressure of events like Black Friday, where speed, control, and cost predictability matter most.

The Umbraco Difference

- **Modular by Design** → Start with the open-source CMS, then add only the enterprise capabilities you need: Cloud for scalability, Commerce for conversions, Engage for personalization, Heartcore for headless.

- **Composable Ecosystem** → Seamlessly integrate best-of-breed tools via open APIs and a thriving marketplace, rather than being forced into bundled add-ons.

- **Predictable ROI** → No licensing cost for the CMS, and you only pay for the add-ons or services you use. This keeps TCO low and budgets under control.

- **No Vendor Lock-In** → Unlike closed-source competitors such as Optimizely or Kentico (whose bundles limit third-party integrations), Umbraco ensures freedom of choice.

Composability means you scale on your terms. You can experiment, adapt, and extend without the penalty of costly contracts or unused modules.

Learn more ↗

Partnering with Umbraco for Peace of Mind

Black Friday is high stakes. Having the right partner ecosystem around your platform means you're not facing it alone. With Umbraco, you can combine support, dedicated hosting, training, and partner expertise to prepare with confidence.

Support
Choose the support tier and SLA that match your mission-critical windows. Benefit from expert escalation, proactive guidance, and access to engineers who know the CMS inside out. For peak events like Black Friday, support ensures your team has a safety net when the unexpected happens.
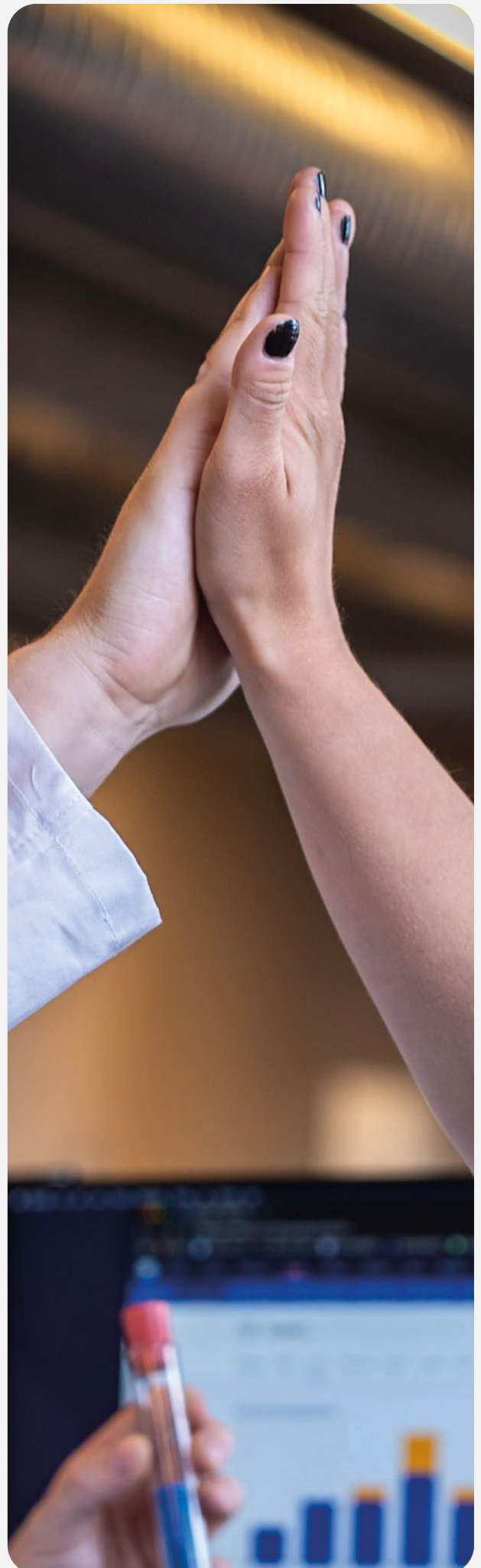
Dedicated Resources
For businesses that need maximum performance and control, Dedicated Resources provides isolated hosting environments within Umbraco Cloud.

Training
Confidence also comes from preparation. With official Umbraco courses, from Fundamentals to advanced Cloud, Security, and Load Balancing, your teams can be trained to handle the exact workflows and challenges of high-traffic events.

Partner Ecosystem
Tap into a global network of certified Umbraco agencies with experience scaling commerce and content for enterprise clients. Whether you need extra capacity or specialized expertise, certified partners help ensure your campaigns launch on time and perform as intended.

umbraco