



The gift that keeps on giving

Shopping local is the ultimate gift you can give your community and it is an incredibly patriotic act. By shopping local, you keep your money local, investing in the place that invests in you.

Read on for some inspiring reasons to shop local.

You Make Your Town the Place to Be

Local shops and businesses are what give a town its flavor. By spending money in local shops — especially those that support local makers — you are making a statement that you appreciate those trades and would like to see them remain in the area. Supporting those businesses can even attract more people to your area. Towns and cities with vibrant downtown areas are hot spots during the shopping season, resulting in more revenue for many related businesses, organizations and tourism bureaus.

You Help Shape Your Community

A community's small businesses are what give a town or city its heart; these are places that help shape your town's character and personal brand. Locally owned businesses tend to stock the items and products that they know will sell well. By purchasing from small businesses, you are helping to dictate the items they sell, as well as their overall success in the community.

You Support Your Neighbors

Well, maybe not technically your neighbors, but definitely others who live in your area. Not only do small businesses account for more than 99 percent of all the business in the country (that is a lot of jobs),



but they support and give to local programs. One of the most popular ways small businesses give back is through sponsoring little league teams and major community events. And shopping local doesn't stop at

purchasing gifts. Consider shopping local with your groceries or opening up a savings account at a local bank to save for your Christmas shopping all year round.

Shop local fast facts

Shopping local has become on trend thanks in large part to nationwide marketing campaigns. In fact, Small Business Saturday has become a shopping holiday in its own right — and fares well against its more big-box competitors Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

This is what it means to shop local in the United States.

Small Business Saturday

- Small Business Saturday started in 2010. That year, the event was sponsored and promoted by American Express to encourage the growth of small businesses.

- Small Business Saturday took a dip in 2017, both in foot traffic and in overall dollars spent. The shopping holiday saw 108 million shoppers who spent approximately \$12.9 billion, which according to the National Federation of Independent Business and American Express, is 4 million shoppers and more than \$3 billion less than the year before.

- The state-by-state breakdown of the day shows that a majority of participation was through restaurants and bars, with 41 percent of people dining local. This was followed by purchases of clothing and accessories from small businesses (24 percent), grocery stores (23 percent) and then coffee shops (22 percent).

Shopping Small

- You may have already heard more mainstream statistics regarding your dollars (such as when you spend \$100 at a local business, approximately \$68 stays in the local economy, rather than just the \$43 if you would spend that same money at a big-box store.). But did you also know that small businesses accounted for more than half the jobs that have been created in the last decade?

- Additionally, small businesses donate 250 percent more than corporate businesses to non-profits and to community-based causes, according to the Seattle Good Business Network.

- While some shoppers won't purchase items directly on Shop Small Saturday, the shopping holiday has definitely increased small business awareness. People have begun to shop small on other days and more consistently throughout the year.



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Support your local retailers

This has been challenging for retailers – especially for owners of small businesses. On Black Friday and the weeks that follow, you can play your part in giving your locally owned companies a strong finish to a difficult year by shopping locally.

Many local business owners have reported the possibility of having to shut down their stores due to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially ones that rely on continuous foot traffic and in-store shopping. Strong end-of-year sales could make the difference in convincing local owners to keep their lights on in the future.

Why Shop Local?

When you support your local businesses, more of your money will be kept in your local economy. This means more tax dollars to fuel better roads, buildings and local services.

For every \$100 you spend at locally owned businesses, \$68 will stay in the community, according to a civic economics study by the Andersonville Study of Retail Economics. This is compared to \$43 of the \$100 staying in the community if you shop at a national chain.

Keep your money local while still enjoying the thrill of Black Friday shopping by keeping an eye out for specific promotions and deals being offered by your favorite local businesses. Watch their social media feeds and look for ads in your local newspaper.

Shop Locally Online

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses have had to implement varying in-person shopping restrictions, depending on their state government's requirements. This has nudged locally owned companies to shift their customer interactions into more of a digital and pick-up space where customers can order items online and come to the store for pickup, requiring limited interaction. Check with your favorite local business to see what kinds of limitations there may be this Black Friday, and find out how you can best support them during the holiday shopping season.

With many small businesses offering contactless shopping thanks to technology and digital platforms, there's never been an easier time to support your local companies online.



Statistics show just how big small business is

Small businesses have such a big impact on their communities, and the world at large, that it might be time to reconsider referring to them as “small.”

According to the World Bank, small businesses have a major impact on the world economy, especially in emerging countries. In such nations, small and medium enterprises contribute up to 60 percent of total employment and up to 40 percent of national income. Small businesses figure to frame their economies in emerging countries in the coming decades, and they're already doing so in developed nations, such as the United States and Canada. The following statistics show just how big small businesses have become.

- The U.S. Small Business Administration notes that small businesses make up 99.7 percent of all employers in the United States. Percentages are similar in Canada, where BDC, a bank devoted exclusively to entrepreneurs, notes that 99.8 percent of businesses employ fewer than 499 workers.

- Hundreds of thousands of new businesses are started each month, with Yahoo! reporting that about

543,000 entrepreneurs open a business in a typical month.

- Small businesses benefit one another, as a 2017 report from the Canadian firm FreshBooks found that 66 percent of small businesses outsource services to other small businesses.

- No business is too small to be a small business. In fact, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics noted that microbusinesses, which are defined as firms that employ between one and nine employees, accounted for 75 percent of all private-sector employers as recently as 2013.

- Small businesses and happiness might be linked. A 2019 survey from Guidant Financial and the online lending marketplace LendingClub found that 78 percent of small business owners rated their level of happiness as an average of eight on a scale of one to 10 (10 being the happiest).

- Female entrepreneurs are on the rise. A 2017 report from American Express found that female entrepreneurship grew by 114 percent between 1997 and 2017.

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Shop small businesses to improve the holiday experience

It's the time of year when newspapers thicken with sales circulars and holiday advertisements. Consumers looking to beat the hustle and bustle and steer clear of the crowds this year may want to pay attention to local businesses in lieu of trekking to nearby shopping malls.

Every time consumers visit local coffee shops to grab a latte, pick up a dress at a nearby boutique or patronize a farmer's market down the street, they are supporting a small business. The Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving are some of the busiest shopping days of the season, and they also can be some of the friendliest to small businesses.

Plaid Friday was conceptualized in Oakland. It may have been born in the Golden State, but the movement soon spread across the country. Plaid Friday is an alternative to big box stores' Black Friday bonanzas. It is designed to promote both local and independently-owned businesses during the holiday season. The name Plaid Friday was used to help people visualize the various threads of small businesses coming together to create a strong community fabric that was diverse and creativity.

Shoppers can continue their small business patronage with Small Business Saturday. This, too, is a counterpart to Black Friday and Cyber Monday. The first event was created by American Express in conjunction with the nonprofit National Trust for Historic Preservation. Since its inception, many small business groups, merchants and

politicians have touted the event and the Shop Small® mantra. The idea is that when small businesses thrive, communities and individuals thrive along with them.

The Small Business Administration says that, since 1995, small businesses have generated 66 percent of all new jobs in the United States. There are a number of big reasons to shop small. One can start around the holidays and then continue all year long.

- Shopping small businesses helps give back to the community directly. According to Civic Economics, a strategic planning business, on average 48 percent of each purchase made at independent businesses is recirculated locally through tax money and other support.

- Small business owners often strive to provide personalized, hands-on customer service. Repeat business is key to their survival, so they want to ensure shoppers are happy.

- Small businesses, since they are not beholden to corporate oversight in terms of what they sell, have greater flexibility. That allows them to offer a diverse product selection.

- Small business owners often live nearby, and they're the people you see in town, schools and elsewhere in the local community. Many consumers are comforted to know they're supporting their neighbors, especially during the holiday season.

Supporting local businesses is easy. And shoppers who like what they see can share the good news with others on social media.

10 ways to support local businesses

Small businesses are the lifeblood of many communities. In the United States, the majority of businesses in operation are classified as small businesses, according to data from the Small Business Administration and Statistics Canada. Consumers can express their appreciation for the small businesses in their communities in various ways.

1. Create a guide to local small businesses and share it with other people from the community who have like-minded interests.
2. Shop at small businesses regularly.

3. Use social media to give your recommendations on small businesses that go above and beyond in quality and service.

4. Speak with business owners about your experience as a customer, sharing insight about both good and bad experiences.

5. Encourage your family or friends to make small business shopping a larger part of their overall spending plan.

6. Think of small business sponsorships when putting together school- or club-based fundraisers.

7. Host a meet-and-greet event for various small business owners.

8. If you own a small business, keep business cards, flyers or a sign advertising another small business in the area to show mutual support.

9. Invite small business owners to community activity centers, nursing homes, schools, and the like to share their experiences about starting a business in the area.

10. Participate in community events that may be sponsored by small business owners.



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Did you know?

Small business owners must stay abreast of growing trends to keep their businesses going strong. One such trend is the rise of subscription services. Today's customers increasingly want products and services that are tailored to their preferences and delivered right to their doors. Small businesses can tap into this trend by offering specially curated items that are matched to specific consumers' needs. One may have noticed a fair share of subscription e-commerce

businesses that ship items to customers on a regular basis. These subscriptions include everything from meals to beauty products to clothing. There is still room for growth. According to a report by McKinsey & Company, subscription sales increased from \$57 million in 2010 to \$2.6 billion by 2016. In general, this trend also coordinates with another desire of modern consumers — being willing to pay more for a service that delivers a personalized offering.

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