

SHOP LOCAL for the Holidays





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# 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.

# Gifting Hand-Crafted

A handmade gift can add a special note of thought to a gift. But remember to think outside the box. Shopping local can actually allow you to achieve the best of both worlds: Gifting an item that is unique and handmade while also saving yourself the time and stress of creating something yourself.

And let's face it, not all of us were blessed with a crafty gene or skilled artisan hands. This is why local markets exist.

## VISIT A LOCAL BAKERY

Hand-crafted is not limited to wares. For those on your list who prefer a minimalist lifestyle (or have everything), consider a consumable gift. Local bakeries go into overdrive during the holiday season, producing many delicious treats. Consumable gifts are a great way to show someone you care. One of the great things about local bakeries is that they take advantage of the high store traffic, and often produce specialty items only available during the holiday. Homemade marshmallows and cocoa-dusted truffles will make any friend feel loved.

## A GIFT WITH A STORY

Don't hesitate to strike up a conversation with the shop owner. Because local businesses have a vested interest in their own success, they take special care with the items they stock and often know how things are produced. If you find your intended gift has a story, share it. For an added touch of thoughtfulness, choose a piece of fine stationery and write the item's story down. Include the note with the gift.



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## ONLINE PLATFORMS

Many online forums serve as communities of small-businesses selling handcrafted wares, many of which who work out of their homes.

While this may not necessarily be shopping local in the traditional way, it is most definitely shopping small. (You also can probably find local sellers on these platforms.)

It is important to support small businesses because most are family-run. A majority of these businesses are so small they need to keep their overhead low, which means

no brick and mortar building. By purchasing items from these shops, you are helping someone else's dream grow and gaining a handmade gift in the process.

# Plan Your Holiday Meal

**Y**ou've consulted your cookbooks and perhaps the experts at Food Network, and planned your holiday meal. It is now time to start shopping for the bounty. Instead of heading to your local big-box grocery store, consider spreading the joy.

Groceries are an often-overlooked aspect of shopping local, and one that can make a big difference not only to a small business, but to your holiday meal as well.

## **MAKE A LIST, CHECK IT TWICE**

Purchasing items from different shops comes with the territory when it comes to food. The best place for produce may be different than the best shop for meats or bread, unless you have a co-op at your convenience. Arrange your lists by location. This will help keep you organized and not forget any essential item.

## **SCOUT LOCAL FARMS**

If you are looking for a holiday bird to be the centerpiece of your meal, look around for local farms. Many local farms have a stand at a farmers market or will advertise through local channels. This is a great way to get a turkey, for example, that is very fresh and most likely been raised cage-free.

## **VISIT A FARMERS MARKET**

Depending on your climate, you may have an operating farmers market available to you year round. Fall and early winter months just happen to be prime time for root vegetables. Even if you live in a cool-



er climate, many open markets try and stay open as late as possible to help people with their holiday shopping.

## **SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BAKERY**

Take some pressure off yourself and let someone else

handle the desserts. Local bakeries will have plenty to choose from. Just be sure to call and pre-order. Unless you

place your order ahead of time, bakeries may not be able to guarantee their selection by the time you arrive.

# Shop for Local Angels

The holidays are a wonderful time for most of us to be grateful for what we have. The Salvation Army's Holiday Angel Tree Program is a great way for many to give back and be even more happy with what we have.

By shopping for an angel is not only an opportunity to purchase items from small businesses, but to support a child in your own community. In the words of the Salvation Army, "Because of you, a child in need experiences the miracle of Christmas."

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Each Salvation Army Corps has their own process for signing up and qualifying for the Angel Tree program, but all Angel Tree gifts are given to children from infancy through 18 years of age, whose families are in need of extra assistance around the holidays. The program serves thousands of children every year.

## HOW TO ADOPT AN ANGEL

Find an Angel Tree in your area. Most shopping malls host one, but if you are unsure of where to start, the Salvation Army keeps a list of locations on their website you can consult. Each tag on the tree lists a child's name, their age, their gender and a wish lists of items. You can choose any tag you like, using the wish list to guide you as you shop. Then return unwrapped gifts with the tag to the tree.

## MAKE IT A TRADITION

Shopping for gifts is an



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exciting activity and is bound to generate extra zest for the holiday season. Every year, bring another friend along.

Have the kids in your group choose an angel who is around their age, and enlist their help in choosing items

to gift. Let them know that all of the angels listed on the tree are kids in their community. Help the younger members

understand that Santa comes in all forms, and by giving what you can, you become Santa to someone else.



# #GIVING TUESDAY

**G**ivingTuesday has become a movement that celebrates the act of giving. While the campaign promotes charitable acts and other philanthropy throughout the year, it culminates on the first Tuesday following Thanksgiving.

If you decide to participate this year, consider giving your time or money to a local need.

## THE HISTORY

Many noted days now follow the holiday of

Thanksgiving. The big day itself is followed by Black Friday, one of the biggest shopping days of the year. After this is Shop Small Saturday, Cyber Monday and then Giving Tuesday.

Giving Tuesday was created in 2012 by the United Nations Foundation and the 92nd Street Y — marketed for that year's Thanksgiving holiday. The intention of the holiday was to mark a day for celebrating the generosity of giving.

## BY THE NUMBERS

If people enjoy spending money, they also enjoy giving it. Here is GivingTuesday in 2017, by the numbers:

- 2.5 million online gifts were given for more than \$300 million in monetary value.
- More than 150 countries participated in

the campaign, along with more than 120 community coalitions.

- The social media impression of the campaign reached 21.7 billion. That's right, billion.

## TURNING GIVING TUESDAY INTO A LOCAL AFFAIR

While there are many worthy national campaigns and foundations performing great work, there is something to be said for providing charitable acts in your hometown.

Support a local charity or find a local chapter of a larger foundation you admire. Also keep in mind that not all giving has to be monetary. If you're strapped for cash, there are many causes that would appreciate your time — even if it's only for a few hours.

# Promoting Your Business

Shop Small Saturday is a national campaign and one of the most influential in encouraging consumers to spend their dollars locally or to support small businesses.

A crucial element of these campaigns is for small business owners to join in to provide their unique voice to the marketing.

If you own a small business, you should be performing all of the following 10 small business marketing basics — some of which take less than five minutes.

**1. Plan your marketing investment.** Your first stop should be your local newspaper, where you're guaranteed to get your name in front of a built-in audience of local shoppers. Most successful businesses utilize a strategy of placing paid advertisements that put their message repeatedly in front of the right audience. In advertising like everything else in life, you typically get what you pay for.

**2. Closely related, you should plan the messaging you'll present to customers during the holidays.** This is true all year but especially critical during the holiday shopping season when your communications will need to cut through the clutter of many competing messages reaching shoppers. Do you want to promote your personalized service? Your high-quality products? Your bargain prices? The best businesses have a way of clearly promoting their value beyond cut-rate pricing.

**3. Make sure you take advantage of online opportunities, some of which cost nothing but time.** Like the Small Business Saturday page on Facebook. Check to be sure your business is listed accurately on Google.

**4. Be an example.** You should also be supporting local businesses and be seen doing so.

**5. Join forces with other businesses.** There is power in numbers, so use this to your benefit. Perhaps you could create a discount system where, if a customer shops at one local business, they earn a small discount at another.

**6. Be creative with promotions.** Often a small giveaway will get people in the door, and once they are there, they won't be able to resist looking around.



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**7. Make customers feel special.** Don't bombard them as soon as they walk through the door, but find a way to show you notice them and appreciate them stopping by.

**8. Connect with customers.** If a particular item a customer is holding has a story, be sure to let them know.

**9. Participate in local events.** This includes ribbon

cuttings and town festivals. When people start associating your face with your business, you become a walking, breathing advertisement.

**10. Give back.** This could even mean sponsoring a summer league team. You may be hesitant to provide 30 uniforms, but with your name on the back, people will be seeing your business at every game all season long.

# 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



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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 com-

munity-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.