

Shop
LOCAL



Why Shop Local?

“Buy Local” stickers and campaigns are everywhere. You can find them in the corners of shop windows and on decals on people’s vehicles. A community’s local businesses give that region character and are filled with history and tradition.

Why “buy” into the movement? Consider the following three reasons:

INJECTING MONEY INTO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

When you purchase items from a locally owned business, more money stays in the community.

It is this circulation of money that is crucial to a community’s success. Many “ghost towns” — once thriving communities that have shut down or are well on their way — came to their fate not because of too little money being made but because of money flowing out in the direction of big box stores and online retailers.

In fact, according to the Andersonville Study of Retail Economics, shopping locally generates 70 percent more local economic activity per square foot than their big box store counterparts.

SUPPORT LOCAL FAMILIES

According to the Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America, 67 percent of America’s jobs come from small businesses. By spending your money in local shops, you are supporting the people and families that live in your community.

Your dollars are doing more than getting you the items



that you need; they also are helping others in the community get the things they need. Your hard-earned money is being put into local banks and eventually being borrowed to purchase local houses.

While the sticker price may be a little higher at times than you would find in big box

stores, you are guaranteed that your dollar is doing more work for your community.

QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

You are much more likely to get great customer service at a local shop than at a large chain retailer. Local shops

don’t normally apply sales quotas to their employees and depend on consistent customer service to turn a profit.

Local shops also are deeply invested in your experience because they rely on your repeat business and word of mouth. Owners must live and work in the same community

you do, and they will hear about negative feelings about your visit or their product.

Plus, if you have any questions, you will be guaranteed to talk to an actual person (in the shop) rather than a recording or a customer service associate who might be in another country.

The Chamber of Commerce

Almost all communities have a chamber of commerce, so be sure to take advantage of this great resource.

The chamber of commerce is the heart of any thriving business community. Chambers provide a directory of local businesses and often maintain a calendar of local events. Networking with your local chamber's business members is a great way to become more invested in the downtown, family-owned companies in your community.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

The local chamber should have a business directory that includes member businesses. Most small businesses value the benefits and networking being associated with the chamber of commerce brings them, so there should be a fair amount of small businesses on this list.

Pick up a directory or peruse the list on your chamber's website. There might be a few — or several — businesses you don't recognize. This is a great way to expand your list of favorite restaurants or find your next new favorite shop.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Your chamber of commerce also is likely to keep an updated calendar of local events. This calendar should not only have events such as new ribbon cuttings but celebrate businesses and spotlight a different company on a regular basis.

This is a great way to explore new parts of your town or areas you don't get to often. By attending a new shop or restaurant's ribbon cutting, or visit-



ing a business that has been spotlighted, you might discover another shop that is right next door or across the street. Getting out into your community is invaluable in supporting local businesses.

BECOME A MEMBER

Run a business? Thinking about starting one up? Consider becoming a member of your local chamber.

Most chambers have several levels of membership, including business

memberships and individual memberships. This is a great way to hear first about new businesses that are thinking of starting up in the area and networking with current business leaders in the community.

Do as the Locals Do

You can support local businesses even while you're on vacation. Eating fare that is local to your destination offers a more authentic travel experience and can be more affordable.

Consider the following tips and tricks to live like a local — even if it is only for a few days.

RESEARCH BEFORE YOU GO

With all the new technologies at our disposal, it is easier than ever to look up great places to eat and things to do in a given area.

There is a blog for everything these days, and blogs offer an “everyday person’s” perspective on local shops, menus and dining experiences. Discover where others ate and shopped during their travels and how they entertained themselves.

ASK AROUND AND LOOK FOR LINES

While research is a great first step, nothing beats getting out and hitting the streets. Ask locals what their favorite lunch spot is. If you aren't comfortable trying to decide who is a local and who is not, ask a shop vendor.

Not only are you guaranteed they are local because



they work in the community, but most are happy to pass on recommendations and support other local businesses. Don't be afraid to look for lines — a surefire sign that

something great awaits inside.

ORDER THE SPECIAL

One of the best parts of traveling is getting to know the local culture and tradi-

tions, and one of the easiest ways to experience this (and the tastiest) is through food.

When you've found a local restaurant or cafe, don't be afraid to be adventurous and

order the special.

The special also can simply be what a business is “known for.” You will rarely go wrong. You are likely to hear about local entertainment, as well.

Find the Perfect Gift

Watching someone open a gift you've given them is a special kind of joy. Shopping for that gift, however, is another matter. Often, there is a high stress level associated with purchasing items for other people.

There is always the risk of buying someone something they already own or purchasing the same gift as someone else. Shopping locally could be the answer to these problems.

SUPPORT LOCAL ARTISANS

You will likely find many items in local shops that you won't find in big box stores.

Small and locally owned businesses often pride themselves on discovering and supporting local artisans and displaying their wares to the community. Added bonus: By purchasing these items, you are helping to keep your community unique. Supporting these businesses ensures they will stick around for as long as they can.

FIND SOMETHING SPECIAL

Local shops are frequently the best place to find "one-of-a-kind" items, which can restore the "fun" in shopping for a gift.

This includes art. Small local businesses are known for supporting the arts community by allowing artist to display works on their walls and often selling through their stores. Your money could help keep the dream alive for a talented local artist.

KNOW THE STORY

Small shops are also highly



invested in their success and care deeply about the products and items they sell. Because of this, you are likely to get the story behind the product.

You can ask where something was sourced or how it was made, and you will most likely get a thorough answer. While big box stores must buy in bulk so they can stock mul-

multiple stores, small shops only need to stock one space. This means they can take their time and purposefully purchase their inventory. Frequently this leads to forg-

ing relationships with their suppliers — often local tradesmen who also can introduce shop owners to new suppliers or craftsmen who are just starting to sell their wares.

Best Farmers Markets

Farmers markets are the best places for locally sourced foods and fresh in-season ingredients — and are the cornerstone of small business in America. They also are more popular than ever before.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, there were 7,175 farmers markets operating across the country as of 2011. They also have picked up notoriety as a tourist destination.

While these markets began as a way to serve local families and are a popular source of fresh foods for restaurants (and continue to be), they also are a great source of local culture and have become an outing in their own right. Here are just a few farmer's markets worth the trip.

CALIFORNIA

The Los Angeles farmers market is the self-proclaimed “original” farmers market. Established in 1934, it quickly became a must-see destination for travelers and locals alike. This market is open year-round, except on Thanksgiving and Christmas, and is an eclectic mixture of kiosks, stands and even restaurants.

NEW YORK

Union Square Greenmarket in New York City features more than 140 stands and receives more than 60,000 visitors each day. Fresh fruits and veggies are in abundance, but the selection of freshly cut flowers and artisan breads and cheeses are the shining star of this market.

WISCONSIN

The Dane County Farmers' Market is the largest producer-only farmer's markets in the United States. This means that all items are produced by the people behind the tables. Talk about straight from the farmer's mouth — or artisan, as the case may be.

WASHINGTON

In Seattle, find the Pike Place Market by its iconic red “public market” sign. The market's 80 vendors offer everything from fruits and veggies to beeswax candles, homemade soaps and wooden wares. Not to be missed: cooking demonstrations by local chefs.

OREGON

Relatively new to the farmers market scene, the Portland Farmers Market was established in 1992. In addition to a great selection of free-range meats, nuts and traditional legumes, this market is the spot for grabbing Saturday breakfast.



Small Business Trends

When you think about or discuss locally owned businesses, you are actually also talking about small businesses. Small businesses (businesses with 500 employees or less) account for 99.7 percent of all business in the country and provide 67 percent of the nation's jobs, according to the United States Small Business Administration and the Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America.

Here are nine additional facts about small businesses you should know.

- The 2008 recession was part of a major economic downturn worldwide and the worst recession in the United States since the Great Depression in the 1930s. Small business has been a crucial part of the nation's recovery — providing 60 percent of all jobs created between 2009 and 2013, according to the Small Business Administration.

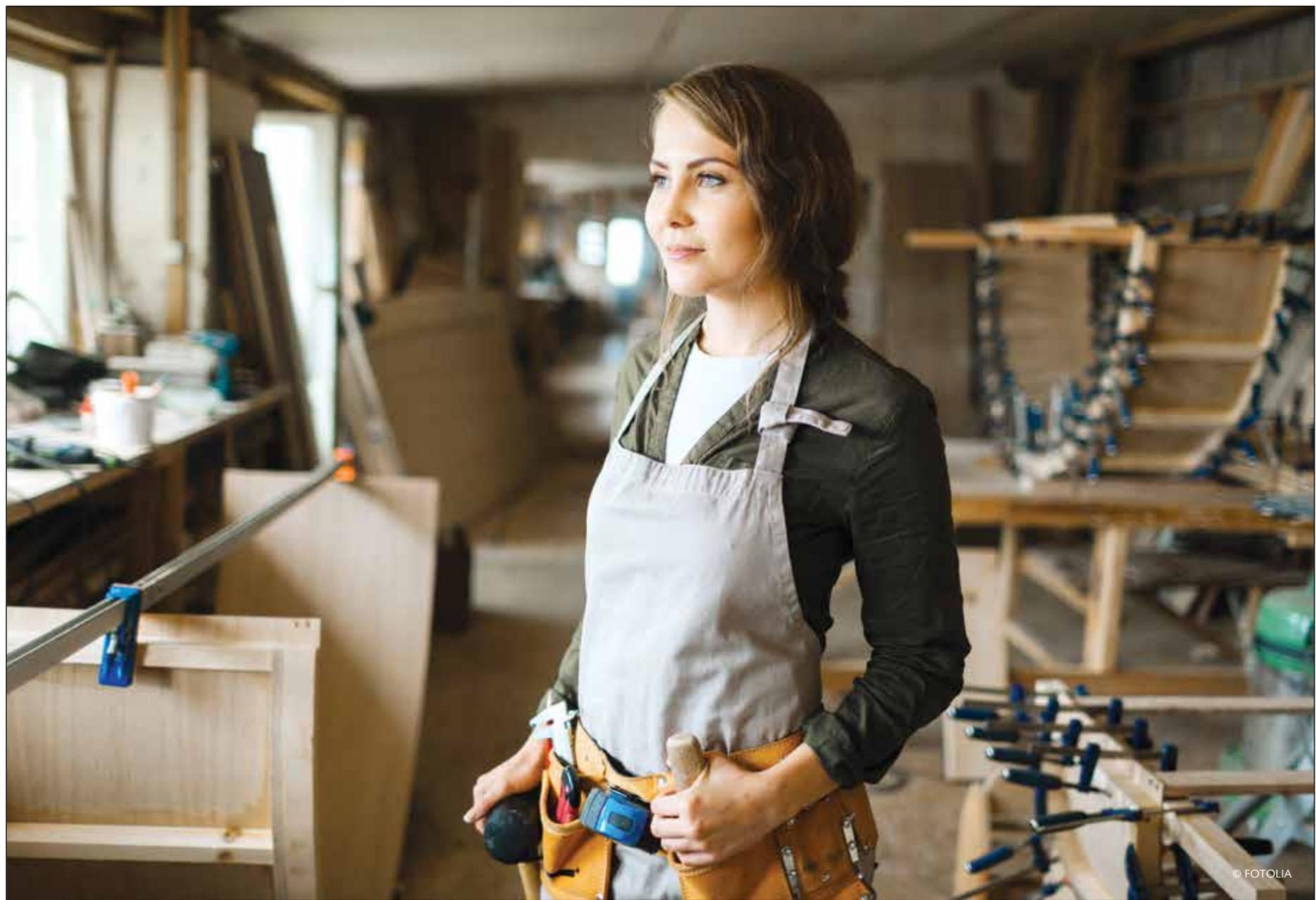
- However, new small businesses have a high failure rate at 30 percent.

- According to a U.S. Bank report, 82 percent of businesses that fail do so because of cash flow problems. Most commonly seen are businesses that rely on seasonal services and invoice-based businesses.

- The longer a company stays in business, the more likely it will continue to stay in business, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

- As of 2012, there were 9.9 million small businesses owned by women, according to the Small Business Administration.

- In 2014, 5.2 million loans in amounts under \$100,000 were issued by lending institutions reporting under the Community Reinvestment Act. These loans have an estimated



total value of \$73.6 billion.

- According to the United States Census Bureau, 96.5 percent of U.S. manufacturing exports were made by small and medium-sized compa-

nies, contributing 19.1 percent of the sector's \$839 billion in exports.

- If every family in the United States spent just \$10 more a month at a locally

owned or small business rather than a big box store or national chain, more than \$9.3 billion would be directly returned to the U.S. economy.

- According to the Small

Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey, Americans spent \$16.2 billion at small businesses on the day in 2015 — a 14 percent increase from the year before.

“Shopping local” is often a term applied to shopping in our immediate community. However, it is important that when we think about shopping locally, we think about global production and consumption. In that regard, the United States also is our local community.

We live in an economy where a majority of our goods are made and produced overseas because the labor is cheaper. Organizations such as The Reshoring Initiative are working hard to bring manufacturing (and the accompanying jobs) back to the United States.

Here are just a few of the many reasons to purchase goods made in the America.

A STRONGER ECONOMY

In the same way purchasing goods from local shops keeps that money in the community, buying American-made goods infuses the country’s economy — keeping your money domestic so that it can be reinvested in other ways in the United States.

You are recycling your dollars back into the U.S. economy: Your money pays the worker who helped make the product. Every American worker pays taxes on money earned in the U.S., which is then used for education, social programs, agriculture and business.

MORE JOBS

The United States lost 5.7 million manufacturing jobs between 1998 and 2013, according to a report from the Economic Policy Institute. Shopping “American Made” supports those companies that choose to employ

Americans.

Your dollar is the currency that garners the most attention, and how you spend it matters.

A LOWER CARBON FOOTPRINT

Goods that are made in the United States have a lower carbon footprint than goods made overseas. The United States transports and ships

\$2.2 trillion worth of products from more than 150 countries every year.

This results in 1 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide produced and 11 billion gallons of fuel used, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Products made in the United States must only be shipped across the country, decreasing their carbon footprint significantly.

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