

There is nothing more convenient than whipping out your phone, typing in a URL (or opening an app), perusing offerings, and hitting a few buttons to buy something. .anything. .everything. We even get our groceries that way these days. But as convenient as online shopping seems, there are several reasons to shop local.



In person is the way to go this Small Business Season. If you can suspend disbelief for a few minutes, we'll explain why.

## Our Favorite Reasons to Shop Local During Small Business Season

Yes, online shopping is convenient. You don't have to change out of your PJs and it's always open. But in the t-chart of holiday shopping options, there are a lot of reasons to shop local.

Here are a few of our favorites:

You're supporting your neighbors.

When you support Small Business Season and shop local, you are supporting your neighbors and they are more likely, in turn, to keep the money you spent with them local as well (for every \$100 spent locally, \$68 of it stays local).

You are able to get in-person advice.

Not sure of the right size, color, or other option? Maybe you want to buy something but don't know what else you need to make that purchase complete (like buying a fishing rod without any hooks or lures). An in-person shopping experience can help you straighten out the choices. Small business owners offer complete information and suggestions and you can ask questions about those suggestions. Doing that via chat online can be cumbersome and delayed as they are answering questions from several other shoppers at the same time.

You know what you're getting.

Have you ever ordered something online only to be disappointed when it arrives? Maybe it's smaller than you thought or the color is just too much. Online images can be very hard to discern. (Remember that dress a few years back? What color was that anyway?) If you don't read the description carefully, your item may be smaller (or larger) than expected and may not include things you had assumed came with it. Even when you do read the description, some items are sized differently or have unexpected variations. Don't even get us started on what happens then.



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Local yields easier returns.

Even though you have a clear understanding of what you're buying when you buy in person, sometimes you need to return your purchase. When you do, it's easier to do it locally than to send something back to an online store. Between paying for shipping to going to the post office and insuring it, bringing it back to a local business is generally easier than online returns.

Satisfaction guaranteed.

If you're not satisfied with what you purchased, but it's not something you can bring back (like a service or a food item), you know how to get in touch with the local provider. Some online sellers make it impossible to speak to a human. Try arguing your point with AI that uses keywords and automated language responses. Talking to the local business owner is much easier and they may be able to suggest something that is more along the lines of what you're looking for.

Local shopping becomes an experience.

Yes, online shopping is quick, but you also have no memory of doing it. This can lead to overbuying. How many times during the holiday do you come home to find a package on your door step and you can't remember what you purchased? You'll remember when you go out. Plus, when you shop in-person or local, you can invite friends, family, or just make a pleasurable outing for yourself. This creates appealing memories of a wonderful seasonal experience.

It brings on the holiday spirit.

When you are out among the sounds and smells of the holiday, it brightens your mood. Who doesn't love sparkling lights, glitter, snow (real or fake), and all of the happy tunes of the season? It's hard to get those same smiles shopping online.

You may miss the best things when you only go online.

When you shop online, you do a few searches for things you are looking for. You are less apt to stumble across the perfect gift or item because you are on a targeted mission and only see what the online store presents. When you're shopping in person,

there are a lot of serendipitous moments where something catches your eye and you walk out knowing you found a treasure.

You meet and interact with people.

When you shop in-person, you meet and interact with people. We have been sequestered long enough. There's something to be said from those chance meetings that occur when walking around town. Who knows—you could meet your next business partner or a former friend. From the warm smile of the business owner to a suggestion, compliment, or affirmation you receive from a fellow shopper, there are many times when these sorts of introductions can be very helpful.

You'll receive better reviews.

Sure, online reviews are helpful but so are reviews from people around you. Plus, people you meet in person who are commenting on what you're buying have a personal connection. They are vouching for the item or dish face-to-face. If you have questions about what they're saying, you can ask. Online reviews are one-sided with very little chance for follow-up from the original poster.

No worries about delivery this small business season when shopping local.

With ports backed up and short-staffing throughout the supply chain, there's a lot of talk about potential delivery delays this holiday. If you shop in-person, you won't need to worry about this.

In-person shopping is perfect for procrastinators.

Sure, there are some online mega retailers who can get an item to you same day depending on where you live, but most times—especially as we get closer to the actual holiday—your best bet for last-minute gifts is a local shop. If you're a procrastinator, feel free to take this reason to shop local as permission. You'll feel less stressed about waiting, plus you won't be depending on someone else's delivery schedule.

Displays help you visualize.

Store displays are better than "you might also like" options in online stores. After all, the online suggestions are based on the buying patterns of others or using products the

online retailer links together. Store displays are created (and stores are arranged) to help you find what you need and want. Collections are curated with the shopper in mind. You may find a lot of treasures browsing that way.

Window shopping can lead to ideas.

When you shop in-person around the holidays you'll be treated to beautiful window and decoration displays. These could inspire your holiday home décor or help you figure out something for your hard-to-buy-for aunt. A display may also draw you into trying a new business that you hadn't noticed before. There are so many serendipitous possibilities when shopping in-person this Small Business Season.

You could find your next job.

If you shop in-person, you'll quickly realize how many businesses are hiring. Who knows. You might decide to work at your favorite shop over the holidays.

One's couch has never been the setting for a Hallmark holiday movie but Main Street certainly has.

And we all love those movies, don't we?



We aren't telling you to never shop online again. Online shopping is simply too convenient and there are many times when you can get things delivered online faster

than you are able to clear your schedule and shop in-person. There are also many local sellers that have an online presence so you can buy online and still “shop local.”

Still, there are several reasons to shop local, including the ability to spread some holiday cheer to your local businesses this Small Business Season.

Those business owners would just love to see your smiling face and the serious ones of Mr. Jackson, Hamilton, and Washington.

This Small Business Season, let’s give local and small businesses something to be thankful for.

Let’s give them the gift of our support.

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