Make Small Business Saturday Work for Your Business

By Rob Peters — Small Business Strategist and Author of The Small Business CEO's Playbook

Small Business Saturday is a chance to put your business in front of customers deciding where to shop, dine, and spend their money during the holiday season.

But if you're a small business owner, ask yourself an important question: **What are you doing to give those customers a reason to choose your business?**

This year, Small Business Saturday takes place on **November 28, 2026**. Founded by American Express and additionally sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration, the day encourages consumers to support small businesses during the holiday season.

The opportunity isn't limited to retail stores. Restaurants, service providers, consultants, and online businesses can participate, too. A photographer might offer a gift certificate, a restaurant could create a holiday dining package, or a consultant could promote a planning session for the new year.

No matter what type of business you run, the key is to start with a plan.

Define What Success Looks Like

Before you announce an offer or create a social media post, decide what you want to accomplish.

Are you looking to attract new customers, bring existing customers back, sell gift certificates, or generate future bookings?

Choose a primary goal and let it guide what you promote, who you reach, and how you measure your results.

Create an Offer That Works for Your Customers—and Your Business

A special offer can motivate people to act, but it doesn't have to be the biggest discount in town.

Consider a product bundle, service package, gift certificate, useful bonus, or experience customers can give to someone else. Choose something that reflects what your customers value and what your business does well.

Then look at your costs, including products, supplies, labor, payment processing, and marketing. If you're selling a service, consider the time and resources you'll need to deliver it.

Remember: **A busy day and a profitable day aren't always the same.** Your offer should attract customers while still making sense for your business.

Make Sure Customers Can Find You

You can create a great offer, but customers need to find your business and understand what you're offering.

Search for your business online as a customer would. Are your hours, location, phone number, and website accurate? Update your holiday hours wherever customers may find you, including Google, Apple Maps, and Bing.

Consider adding your offer to your Google Business Profile. Explain what customers will receive, when it's available, and how they can purchase it.

If you accept American Express, check the Shop Small Map's current requirements and whether you need to opt in. Innovative Group's local search checklist offers additional ideas.

Finally, invite recent customers to share an **honest review** and take time to respond. It shows you appreciate their feedback and are paying attention to their experience.

Spread the Word and Work Together

Don't wait until Small Business Saturday to tell customers what you're planning.

Share your offer through email, social media, your website, signage, and conversations with customers. Explain what you're offering, when it's available, and how to buy.

Ask your chamber of commerce, trade association, or downtown organization about local shopping guides, events, and promotions. You might also partner with a complementary business to introduce your customers to each other.

Prepare for the Day—and What Comes After

Before your promotion begins, check your inventory, supplies, staffing, schedule, and purchase or booking process. Make sure your team understands the offer. If you're a solo business owner, set limits that reflect what you can realistically handle.

After the sale, thank customers, invite them to stay connected, and give them a reason to return. If you collect email addresses or mobile numbers, make sure customers agree to receive your messages.

Then review your results. What sold? How did customers hear about you? Did the promotion meet your goals after costs? The answers can help you build a stronger plan next time.

Your Small Business Saturday Checklist

- Set a clear goal and create an offer customers will value.
- Calculate your costs and make sure the promotion supports your profit goals.
- Update your holiday hours and online business information.
- Consider a Google Business Profile offer and check your Shop Small Map eligibility.
- Invite honest reviews and respond to customer feedback.

- Promote your offer and connect with your chamber or other local businesses.
- Prepare your team, supplies, and purchase process.
- Thank customers, follow up, and measure your results.

Small Business Saturday can help you increase sales, reach new customers, and strengthen existing relationships. Start with a goal, keep your offer clear, and take action now to make the most of it.

About the Author: Rob Peters is a small business strategist, entrepreneur, keynote speaker, and author of The Small Business CEO's Playbook. Drawing on more than three decades of experience as a business owner, Rob shares practical strategies to help entrepreneurs strengthen customer relationships, stand out from competitors, and build stronger businesses. Learn more and order The Small Business CEO's Playbook.

Resources:

- U.S. Small Business Administration's Small Business Saturday page
- American Express Shop Small Resource Hub

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