

Shop Small Guide:
**Tips to Maximize
Sales for Your
Local Business**



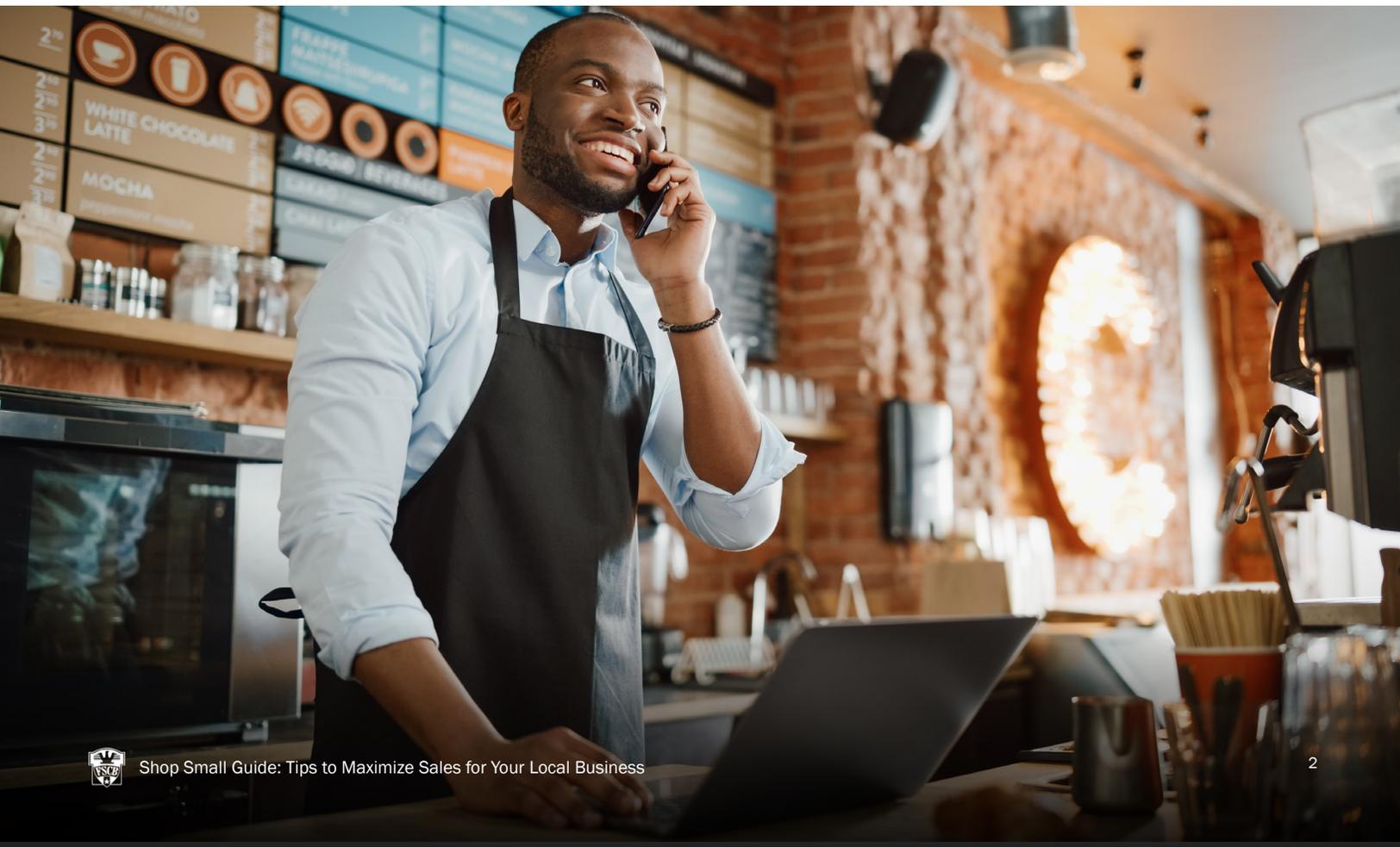
Success Starts Here.



First State
Community Bank

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Introduction

While the pandemic created significant short-term economic challenges for small businesses—and small retailers in particular—it also triggered a shift in consumer behavior that may offer a path to greater small business prosperity in the years to come.

Multiple surveys of consumers have found that, since the start of the pandemic in 2020, a large segment of shoppers—particularly millennial and Gen Z consumers¹—are more intentional about buying from local businesses² to support those companies with their spending power.

With buyers more willing to look past big-box conveniences and invest their hard-earned money back into local communities, small businesses have a big opportunity to grow both their seasonal sales and their long-term customer base.

To capitalize on this opportunity, small businesses need to [develop a marketing strategy](#) that will increase visibility for their brand, drive in-store visits, and boost sales through annual shopping events such as Small Business Saturday.

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Why Your Customers Should Care About Small Businesses

Consumers aren't only looking to buy local because it makes them feel good. As consumers in recent years have recognized the power of their spending to support and strengthen local businesses and communities, they are increasingly committed to re-evaluating their own spending habits and taking some personal responsibility for their local economies.

Rather than forking over their shopping budget to multinational corporations that siphon money out of local communities and up into the pockets of executives and shareholders, consumers now see personal and community-wide benefits to supporting smaller shops, such as increasing the health of their community, fostering a stronger local job market, and creating better local shopping options for themselves.



The History of Small Business Saturday

Small Business Saturday is a relatively new seasonal shopping event. It was [developed by American Express in 2010](#) as a way to motivate increased consumer spending at small businesses struggling in the aftermath of the Great Recession.

Small businesses embraced this event and began leveraging customer expectations through events and promotions that turned this makeshift shopping event into a free marketing tool to bring in customers.

It didn't take long for the seasonal retail event to become a mainstay for local shops seeking an opportunity to boost their sales and strengthen ties with local shoppers: A little more than a decade later, Small Business Saturday is responsible for driving more than \$20 billion in consumer spending at small businesses across the United States.

The public's widespread recognition of Small Business Saturday makes it much easier for small businesses to market themselves and drum up anticipation around this event, but marketing and advertising still play a critical role for businesses that want to take full advantage of this shopping event—and use it as a launching pad not only for holiday sales but also for increased foot traffic and consumer activity all year long.

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How to Leverage Your Small Business Status with Marketing

Small businesses face a number of disadvantages when it comes to competing with big-box retailers and online retail giants, including:



Inventory availability



Shipping timelines



Marketing budgets



Pricing limitations

The sum total of these limitations, along with other inherent disadvantages, have traditionally painted local businesses into a corner when they try to go head to head with deep-pocketed retail brands.

These disadvantages are exactly why Black Friday isn't necessarily the best event to build a costly advertising and marketing budget around. It's also one of the reasons why Small Business Saturday remains so popular and important, giving local businesses a dedicated outlet to level the playing field by highlighting some of their own inherent advantages.





With consumers showing a greater desire to support small businesses now than in years past, your business should leverage this opportunity by emphasizing its small, local status in all of your messaging. As you promote and position your business as a local shopping option, consider ways you can emphasize your community contributions and value by highlighting relevant characteristics of the business. These may include:

- How long the business has been in operation
- Local volunteer efforts owners and/or employees have made
- Partnerships with local organizations
- The history of its local owners and/or employees
- Charitable efforts
- Other examples of community support

As consumers look for ways to support local businesses through their holiday spending, these characteristics can be woven into messaging and promotional information to make a case for why local shoppers should visit your store on Small Business Saturday.

Checklist: How to Plan a Successful Small Business Saturday

Whether you're new to Small Business Saturday or you're looking for tips and tricks to improve on past years' results, every local business should approach this retail event with a sole focus on creating customer experiences that will motivate sales and foster fond memories to keep those customers coming back in the months and years to come.

A little outside-of-the-box thinking doesn't hurt, either. With that in mind, here are some steps and strategies you might want to consider [in your own retail planning](#):

- Plan a special in-store event.** This could take any number of forms, depending on your available resources and what creative solutions your business comes up with. Can you persuade a former sports star to sign autographs in your store in the afternoon? What about holding a contest for a big-ticket item that everyone can enter by making a purchase, or hosting a gift-wrapping or other craft class free of charge to bring in shoppers? Think about what your customers want—and what you're able to accommodate in terms of the cost of that event and your physical retail space—to come up with an idea that will reel in eager shoppers.

- Offer a giveaway or door prize.** What sort of small items can you offer in exchange for making a purchase or even walking through your store? From trinkets to sweet treats, think about what your target customer might want, and make sure you can afford to pass out hundreds of these over the course of the day.



- Extend your hours.** If you operate with limited hours on a normal day, you may want to consider opening early and/or closing late to maximize your sales opportunities. As you weigh this decision, find out what hours your neighboring businesses plan to stay open, as well as whether there are local events running that will keep shoppers in the area outside of your typical hours of operation.

- Run a special one-day sale.** In the same way Black Friday baits shoppers with unbeatable deals, a similar approach could work as part of your Small Business Saturday strategy.

- Coordinate a promotion among nearby local businesses.** A small business passport, for example, can offer a special reward to shoppers who make a purchase at every storefront on your block.

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- Increase staff to maximize customer service and responsiveness.** When anticipating an influx of in-store shoppers, make sure you're properly staffed to meet the needs and service demands of that large crowd. You want everyone to have a great experience, even when your store is busy.

- Partner with a local charity to host an in-store donations drive.** Toy and food drives are popular around the holidays, and they can bring in additional foot traffic while building goodwill for your business.

- Run a social media contest using check-ins, hashtags, and other interactions that increase social visibility for your business.** Whether there's a prize attached or it's just for fun, this can help you leverage your shoppers' social networks to grow your digital presence.

- Create a selfie wall.** Want to win over a younger clientele? Selfie walls have been a huge hit in other retail settings, and they're relatively inexpensive to make.

Give Your Customers the Shopping Experience They Crave

Online shopping is all about convenience. But when it comes to shopping at the holidays, consumers are looking for fun experiences and gifts with meaning. And, more than ever, they're seeking out opportunities to support the communities they love through their holiday spending.

The right business strategy can make all the difference. At FSCB, we pride ourselves on providing financial products and services that help small businesses and communities thrive. [Contact us today to learn more about our business services.](#)



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About First State Community Bank

Whether you're seeking a line of credit, a personal loan, credit card transfer options, or financial counseling services to improve your money management, we're committed to helping you set and reach your financial goals.

Since 1954, First State Community Bank has been a leading financial resource to residents and businesses across the state of Missouri. First State Community Bank has built its reputation on an unyielding commitment to delivering the best possible service to customers and partners, from the Junior Savers who open an account with \$1 to those applying for multimillion-dollar commercial loans. Our mission is to help our customers achieve financial success on their terms, whether that means buying a new home, starting a business, or planning for retirement. We are here to help you reach your financial goals today and into the future.

**Learn more by connecting with the FSCB team
to see how you can get started today.**

Get in Touch at [FSCB.com](https://www.fscb.com)

Sources:

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2. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/consumers-want-to-support-their-local-economy-by-supporting-local-businesses-according-to-a-survey-by-zyppmedia-301066610.html>

