



The importance of shopping and doing business locally

Alyssa Gregory 09/05/2013



More and more, people are being encouraged to shop locally. This movement isn't just a fad, and it has benefits that reach beyond keeping small mom and pop retailers afloat in a difficult economy.

Here are just a few reasons why it's important to shop – and do business – local whenever possible.

Shopping local stimulates the local economy.

When you shop at locally owned stores, the money you spend stays within the community. That's because local businesses are more likely to purchase from other local businesses. The result is that the local tax base grows, and you can help your local businesses keep each other growing.

A stronger tax base means improved schools, better roads, and greater support for your local police and fire departments.

It creates local jobs.

Small businesses are big employers. With jobs being created right where you live, your friends, neighbors and family can find jobs closer to home. That has a huge impact on family, community and the environment because it cuts back on commute times.

Shopping local results in better consumer choices.

The more choices you have, the better the deals you can find. Small businesses encourage competition in the marketplace in a way that mega-corporations just can't.

In addition, local businesses provide products and services from local craftsmen and artisans, offering unique options that you won't find in national stores. You have an opportunity to buy what you truly want instead of being forced into selecting from a handful of low-quality, high-profit-margin items.

Many people don't shop local because they think they can't buy the things they need in a local store. That's simply not true; small business owners are more willing to carry and stock special items their customers need in order to be more accommodating.

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The customer service is better.

When you run into a problem, you're more likely to receive a satisfactory resolution from a local business owner than from a big-box chain. That's because you probably know the people in charge at a local store. Large chains quickly become bureaucratic, and by the time you're in touch with someone empowered to remedy the problem, you're frustrated beyond repair.

Local businesses are greener.

Small businesses are usually centrally located so that they're easily accessed from a town center. This reduces sprawl and habitat loss. Plus, it means using less fuel to get to and from the shop.

Local non-profits get more support.

Local businesses donate more to local non-profits, directly benefitting your friends, family and neighbors.

Shopping local directly benefits you.

Because local businesses help grow the economic base of your community, the dollars you spend have a domino effect. In many ways, that money will eventually find its way back to you.

That's not all. Small towns can survive difficult downturns in the economy with a thriving local business center. Shopping local keeps your neighborhoods safe and beautiful and stabilizes home values.

Remember, you don't have to shop local every time to make an impact. Getting in the mindset of shopping and doing business locally *first* is all it takes to start improving your community.

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