

2017 Consumer Pulse on Small Businesses

A survey of nearly 1,900 American consumers explores their support of local small to mid-sized businesses, and shares sentiments on what factors would increase this support.

Consumers Big on Supporting Small Businesses

An overwhelming number of American consumers visit a local small or medium-sized business (SMB) at least once a week - with slightly more than a quarter (**27 percent**) visiting a SMB at least twice a week on average.

Only **eight percent** of Americans responded they typically don't visit local small businesses in their communities in an average week.



Giving Local Love

When selecting their top three reasons for supporting small and medium-sized businesses, **67 percent** of consumers selected "local support," with convenience garnering **63 percent** and **50 percent** of consumers selecting greater customer service.

Here's a look at other factors leading to small business support:



45%
Familiarity



35%
Loyalty



26%
Greater level of trust
(than large business)



14%
More competitive
pricing

Going Green is Good for Business

Close to **70 percent** of American consumers would also spend more money at a small business if that small business supported a positive social or environmental cause and **59 percent** think small businesses should openly promote the causes they support.



Make it personal

While email is still a preferred form of communication for improving customer engagement, small businesses can reach out and touch customers at in-person events. With an option to select all that apply, here's what communication forms consumer selected for small businesses to improve customer engagement.



53% Email



45% In-person events



45% Social marketing



25% Text



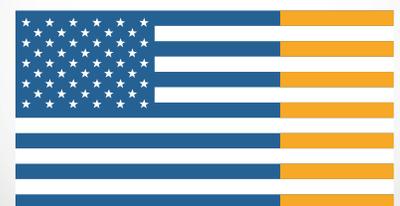
21% Direct mail



11% Phone

Buy from the U.S.A.

A majority of respondents would spend more money at a small business if they only sold U.S.-manufactured items.



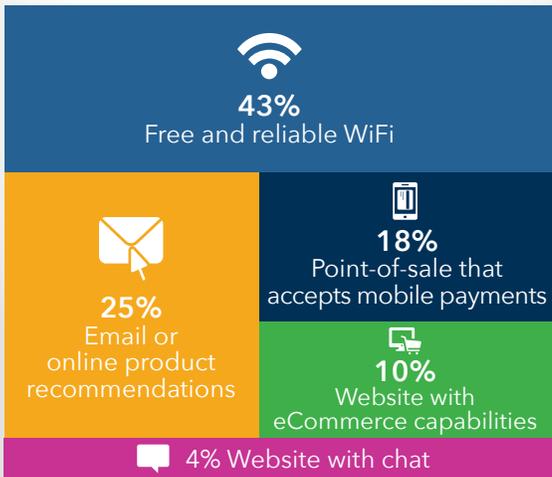
70%
Yes

30%
No

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Ringing Endorsement of Reliable WiFi

Technology can play a role in enhancing the customer experience at small businesses, according to some consumers. Free and reliable WiFi topped the preferred technology list in this question: What type of technology would enhance the customer experience at your favorite small business?

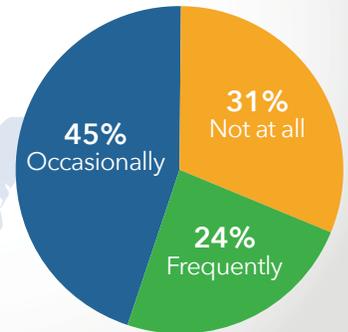


Made in America

Eighty-five percent of surveyed consumers responded that shopping/dining at small businesses make them feel like they're supporting the American workforce and economy.

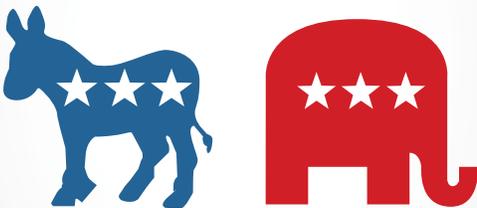
However, most small business shoppers don't regularly check labels to see where products are manufactured.

When asked how often do you check to see if products at a small business are labeled "Made in America," less than a quarter of respondents answered "frequently."



A Pass on Party Politics

Red or blue doesn't seem to matter to consumers when it comes to small business shopping. Only **16 percent** of survey participants would stop supporting a particular business if they knew the owner voted differently than they did, with **84 percent** stating that wouldn't impact their small business shopping choices.



Slightly more, **35 percent**, would stop supporting a small business if they knew the business owner was vocal on social media about his/her political leanings or preferred candidate.



Give Them a Break

Small businesses don't need to stay open on the holidays to compete with their big business competitors.

Only **23 percent** of consumers think small businesses should stay open on the holidays, with the other **77 percent** giving this a Frosty 'no' vote.



About the 2017 Cox Business Consumer Sentiment Survey on Small Business

Cox Business commissioned a blind survey of American consumers in March of 2017. Respondents to the online survey included a total of **1,848 consumers**. The margin of error for this survey is plus or minus **three percent**.

About Cox Business

The commercial division of Cox Communications, Cox Business provides voice, data and video services for more than **300,000** small and regional businesses nationwide, including healthcare providers, K-12 and higher education, financial institutions and federal, state and local government organizations. The organization also serves most of the top tier wireless and wireline telecommunications carriers in the U.S. through its wholesale division.

Cox Business is consistently ranked as one of the top Ethernet providers and recognized by third parties for award winning business telecom service. For more information, please visit www.coxbusiness.com.