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Why Shop Local?

Shopping local does so much for your community.

From promoting entrepreneurship and product diversity to building prosperity and well being, keeping your money at home has plenty of tangible benefits.

LOCAL CHARACTER

We live in an increasingly homogenized marketplace, where the same stores, restaurants and hotels can be found at every highway exit. Shopping local helps preserve the one-of-a-kind businesses that give every town its distinctive character. Hometown shops also help sustain city centers, neighbor-to-neighbor communication and a variety of local charitable and civic efforts.

STRONG ECONOMY

Local ownership also helps ensure that those who live near you remain a part of the conversation when governmental decisions are made. These small businesses sometimes provide better benefits and wage packages, and often lead the way in fueling economic prosperity and innovation. Locally owned

companies return a far larger share of revenue to the economy that immediately surrounds them, according to the Institute for Local Self-Reliance. Your money goes right back to your going straight into your village, town, suburb or city — helping it to thrive.

IMPROVED SUSTAINABILITY

Small businesses often revitalize empty existing properties, especially in city centers. They typically don't require the kind of massive infrastructure investments associated with newly built retail strips and big-box stores. Besides cutting down on habitat loss, they reduce sprawl by encouraging walkable shopping — and that also cuts down on air pollution.

INCREASED COMPETITION

Bustling small-business communities encourage both low prices and more innovation. They also promote product diversity, since their business plans are based on smaller city- or county-sized samples — rather than national or international sales models. Shopping local helps guarantee that you'll always have more choice in the marketplace.



PERSONAL TOUCH

Many local businesses are family run, meaning you'll get to know the owners and their unique stories. They'll provide the kind of personal touch that you typically can't get from sprawling supercenters. This personal touch trickles down into the multitude of choices

you'll find among small businesses. But it can have a big impact in the wider community, as well. Many of these businesses also support local charities and non-profits, so the money you spend helps make your town a better place to live.

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Learn Why it's Important to Support Local Auto Sales

By Bill DeBoer

According to analysts, including Forrester Research, online shopping sales are expected to top \$370 billion in 2017, up from just over \$230 billion in 2012. But in our technology-centered world, this news probably comes as no surprise. More shoppers of all ages are reaching for their keyboards rather than their car keys to buy a variety of products, ranging from clothes to furniture. However, there's one important purchase most customers still insist on buying in person: a vehicle.

MANY LOCAL DEALERSHIP HAVE EMBRACED HAGGLE-FREE PRICING

While many car buyers research vehicle makes and models online, they still overwhelmingly head to a local dealership to make a vehicle purchase. One reason? They realize they can save hours of time with haggle-free pricing policies that are becoming more common at independent car dealerships. Historically, the car buying process has had a negative reputation. Unless you're a savvy negotiator, you probably don't relish the prospect of engaging in the back



and forth battle of dollars and cents with a car salesman and being uncertain if the price you're paying for a car is really the lowest possible price. Fixed-price dealerships eliminate this stressful and time-consuming dance, which makes a face-to-face transaction straightforward and stress-free.

A FACE-TO-FACE TRANSACTION IS QUICK AND TRANSPARENT

Another benefit of buying a car from a local dealership is it's much faster than buying a car online. At the dealership, you can touch and feel the merchandise and inspect it. When you're spending thousands of dollars, it stands to reason you want to see what you're buying

in person, before you sign on the dotted line. When you do sign on the dotted line at a dealership, you can drive your new car home immediately. Additionally, you'll have the benefit of being able to discuss the car with skilled personnel who can point out and demonstrate unique features of the vehicle. An online car-buying experience doesn't provide that turnkey one-on-one service.

USING A LOCAL CAR REPAIR SHOP SUPPORTS YOUR COMMUNITY

Another important reason why it's important to support local auto sales. When you're in the market for a new car, you're investing in your

community. When you buy from a local dealership, you're helping the dealership's bottom line and that creates a commercial ripple effect that contributes to the local economy. It's important to make sure you're finding a dealership that is going to deliver the best experience and has a good reputation. Many local businesses sponsor youth sports teams and local charities and sponsor special events that are worthwhile to the community. Additionally, dealerships buy goods and services from other local businesses. A vehicle is a big-ticket item. Buying local is a win-win for you and your neighbors.

Support local and Support your business
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Finding Hometown Spots

Looking for the best tucked-away local businesses?

It's easy enough to find the average big-box retailers, since they have large advertising budgets and even larger physical locations. Here's how to dig deeper.

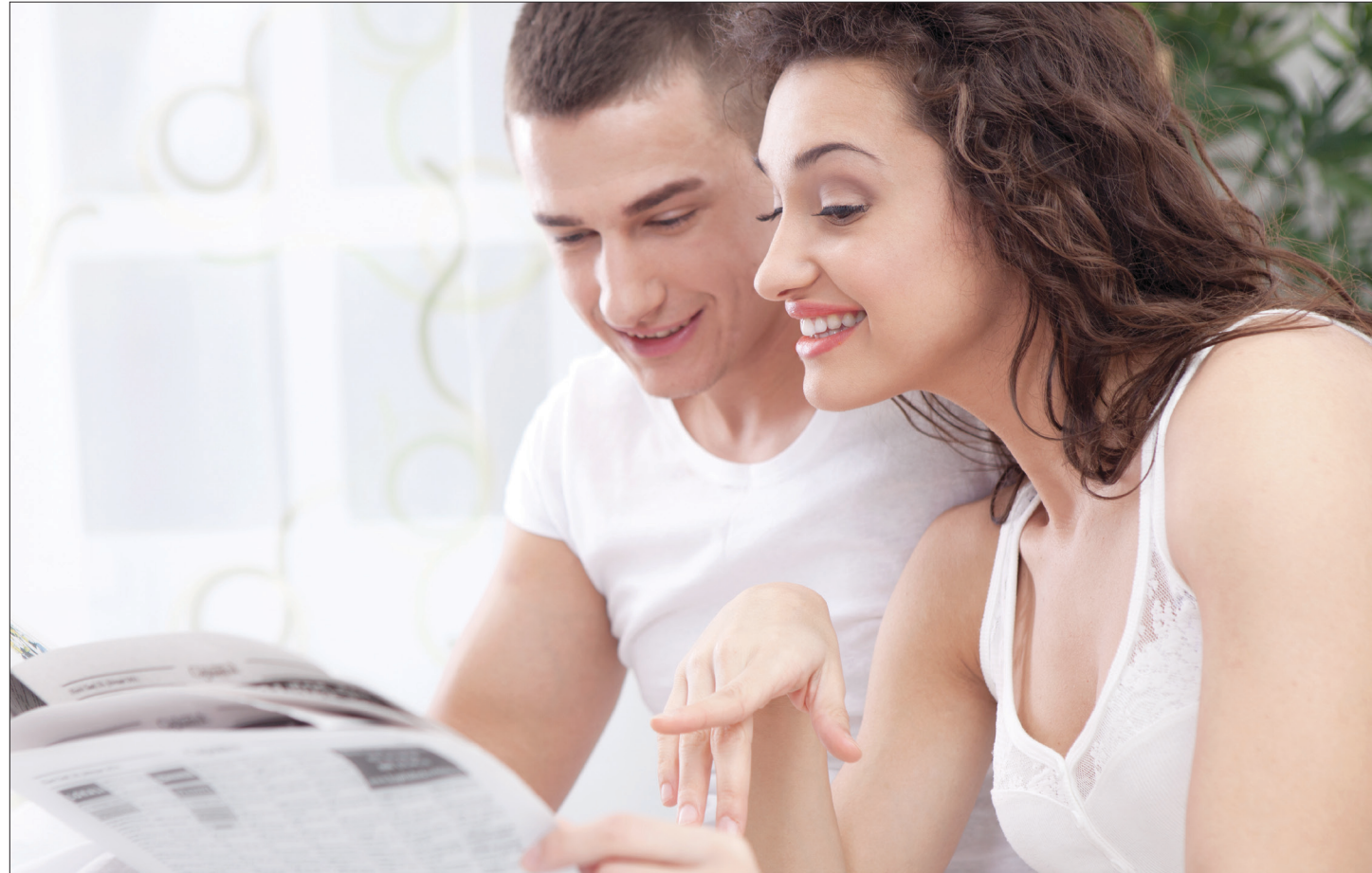
LOCAL NEWS

Social media, monthly and weekly magazines, trade publications and the daily newspaper offer a wealth of information on hometown shops, family-run businesses and other unique local options. Take the time to look closely over each issue. You may find details in display ads, feature stories, personal reviews or in calendar listings.

Neighborhood-focused sites like Nextdoor also have a recommendation feature where you can find tips to discover the next great shopping, home-repair, dining or entertainment spot.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Most local communities, no matter how small, have a group of civic leaders looking out for their local economy at the Chamber of Commerce. They make terrific guides for those searching for any form of goods and services offered in your area — and they have a vested inter-



est in connecting those businesses with you. Some areas also have unrelated non-profit membership organizations who aim is to promote local businesses. A web search can easily tell you how to get in touch. Ask for brochures or directories with comprehensive listings of the companies around you, then start shopping.

THERE'S AN APP

Speaking of the internet, you can likewise rely on a host of

apps as a guide to small businesses. Thumbtack, Angi and the White Pages offer search functions based on your particular need. You can also find reviews, rankings and pricing guides in places like Yelp, TripAdvisor and Foursquare. Google Maps and Yahoo Local link out from general web queries, while apps like HomeAdvisor, Porch and Houzz focus on home-improvement projects. IndependentWeStand also provides a general-search option for those who want to buy

local across the nation.

GET OUT THERE

At the end of the day, the most enjoyable way to find the next great hometown spot is probably just to drive to a new area, then get out and stroll down retail or business corridors. Devote a few hours to a walking tour of discovery. You may find something new that you never noticed when speeding by on your daily commute.



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Grocery Shopping the Local Way

The best way to ensure you're eating local to buy from a farmer.

Farmers markets, pick-your-own operations and on-farm stores are meeting a growing demand for locally grown and organic foods.

LOOKING BACK IN TIME

The first-known U.S. farmers market was established in 1634 in Boston. By the mid-20th century, however, larger-scale stores led to a general decline among street vendors. Farmers markets finally began sprouting up again in the '70s — only this time far away from city centers. These suburban or upper-middle class locales initially drew in more affluent shoppers who had the time and money for more selective shopping experiences. Farmers markets have more recently been made eligible for the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, once known as "food stamps." This has made selecting and eating homegrown food accessible to far more people.

RANGE OF OPTIONS

Many people probably associate these shopping trips exclusively with just-picked vegetables and fruits, and you'll certainly find that at any of the estimated 9,000 farmers markets across the United States. But they're increasingly offering a wider array of related vendors, adding to the experience — and the fresh options. You may find artisan cheeses, cured meats, homemade jellies, local crafts and even live entertainment.

GOOD FOR FARMERS, TOO

Shopping at pick-your-own farms and farmers market obviously helps these growers' bottom line. It's also a critical element in protecting our national food system. Person-to-person transactions offer new farmers, makers and ranchers a low-barrier entry point for sales, and that's increasingly critical as competition to appear on larger chain's shelves continues to increase. In fact, studies show that new produce businesses that blend local and regional food sales with wholesale

efforts survive longer than their counterparts who focus only on trying to break into the chain marketplace.

MARKET FACTS AND FIGURES

There were just 1,755 in 1994, the first year USDA figures were kept. Today, both storied history and impressive numbers back up the growing

trend: For instance, there are more than 400 farmers markets in New York state alone, to go with 250 farm stands and 10 mobile markets. The market in downtown Easton, Pa., has been a staple for nearly 270 years. Some of them, like Pike Place Market in Seattle, have become tourist attractions in their own right. Annual sales in the U.S. total some \$1 billion.

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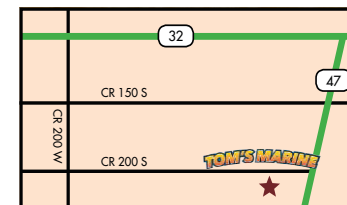
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Remodel Locally

Home remodeling projects are stressful enough without dealing with out-of-area vendors.

Include local distributors and craftsmen in your conversations about building materials, design updates and unique customizations. They'll provide a personal touch, while potentially cutting down on wait times. They might also help you save the planet.

MAKE IT TRULY CUSTOM

Working with local companies ensures that your voice is heard through every step of the process, since you'll be getting person-to-person customer service. Design consultants, sellers and skilled tradesmen from your area offer the kind of personal touch that ensures your remodel is custom and truly one of a kind. It's harder to get that kind of individualized attention, not to mention skill and craftsmanship, from faceless chains or some far-flung corporation. You'll see your vision created in a one-of-a-kind fashion.

SMALLER FOOTPRINT

When you shop locally, you're prioritizing the well-being of your neighbors in our



increasingly globalized economy. You're also bolstering a sense of civic pride. Together, that can have sweeping benefits for any local community. But you could also be strengthening our ecosystem. Ordering material from right down the road also cuts down on transport miles, meaning your remodel may boast a drastically smaller carbon footprint. Sustainable or green materials do even more to improve our planet's health when they don't have to travel so far to be delivered.

HIGHER STANDARDS

Aside from the obvious environmental and cost impacts associated with shipping products made outside of North America by either sea or air, local products are simply more eco-friendly. Stricter environmental standards are typically in place here, both in terms of pollution and process waste product. The U.S. and Canada have led the way, for instance, in banning toxic chemicals like formaldehyde and lead.

FASTER TURNAROUND

Manufacturers in other places will necessarily have to add in additional time to get materials or your finished product to the front door. Waiting around can cost you more than time; it might also break your budget if it leads to cost overruns elsewhere. Consider shopping locally, and custom doors, glasswork, furniture and mirrors should arrive within a shorter timeframe. Local shops won't make you deal with middle-man issues commonly associated with larger companies. That could save you days, or even weeks.

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