the spotlight

A weekly roundup for shopping and doing business locally!



How communities can help to grow local businesses

A community is comprised of various resources that coalesce to make it unique. Businesses are important components of that formula, and successful enterprises increase the chances a community will thrive. According to the business development experts at WSB, businesses help support and diversify a community property tax base, provide goods and services for existing and future residents, and contribute to a strong, local economy. There's much to gain from a thriving local business sector, and communities can help them thrive and grow in various ways.

• Prioritize shopping at local businesses. Before making purchases online or at big-box retailers, shoppers can explore the offerings closer to home. Local businesses often have high-quality items that cannot be found elsewhere.

• Choose local restaurants. When searching for places to enjoy a meal, community members can select local restaurants instead of chains. They also can purchase gift cards to local restaurants when gifting others.

• Encourage and support small business partnerships. According to research by Faire, an online wholesale marketplace, a majority of retailers are focused on establishing partnerships with other local businesses to set them apart from larger competitors. Shared loyalty programs, co-hosted events and joint promotions are popular ways that businesses can benefit from partnerships. Community chambers of commerce can promote such efforts and residents can support them by patronizing these companies.

• Influence local sourcing. While visiting local businesses, consumers can suggest options to influence businesses' own purchasing decisions and encourage them to prioritize local suppliers and products.

• Be informed about local policies. Community members should advocate for policies that are favorable to local businesses and entrepreneurs. This can create a diverse and robust local economy.

The relationship between community members and local businesses is symbiotic. Each provides benefits to the other and the relationship can be nurtured to grow a strong local business community.

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