



Friendly Faces and Tailored Services: American Express OPEN Finds What Brings Consumers to Locally-Owned Shops

KEY FINDINGS

In spite of the anemic U.S. economy, consumers remain committed to shopping at locally-owned, independent stores, spending, on average, a third of their discretionary income (\$102 per month) at these establishments. To cement this loyalty, these small businesses are increasingly catering to their neighborhoods' needs, attracting community conscious consumers and their families and friends.

The American Express OPEN Small Business Saturday Consumer Pulse, an online survey of 1,000 consumers ages 18 and older, reveals the impact small businesses have on local communities and examines consumer spending trends.

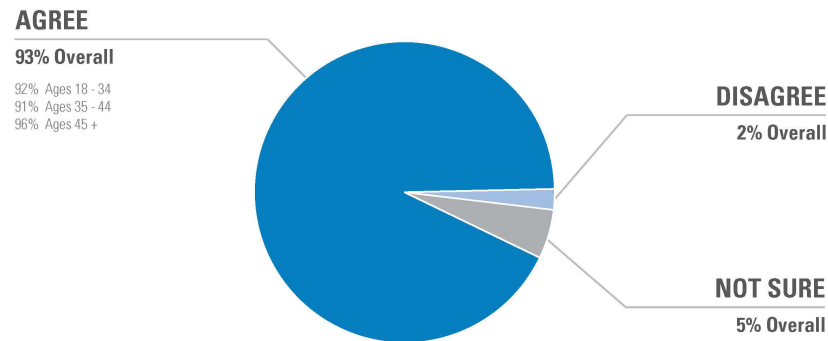
Consumers shop at small businesses to save their local economy

According to the study, more than 9 in 10 Americans (93%) believe it's important to support the local small businesses that they value in their community, and nearly three quarters (73%) consciously shop at small businesses in their community because they do not want them to go away.



Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
"It is important for people to support the small businesses that they value in their community,"

MORE THAN 9 IN 10 AMERICANS BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE TO SUPPORT THE SMALL BUSINESSES THEY VALUE IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD.

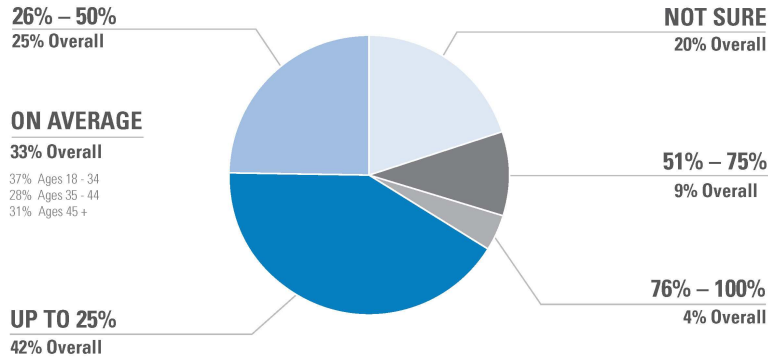


SOURCE: American Express OPEN Small Business Saturday Consumer Pulse



Q. In terms of monthly, discretionary spending in your household, what percentage would you estimate is spent at locally-owned, independent businesses?

ON AVERAGE, CONSUMERS SPEND ONE THIRD (33%) OF THEIR MONTHLY DISCRETIONARY SPENDING AT LOCALLY-OWNED, INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES.

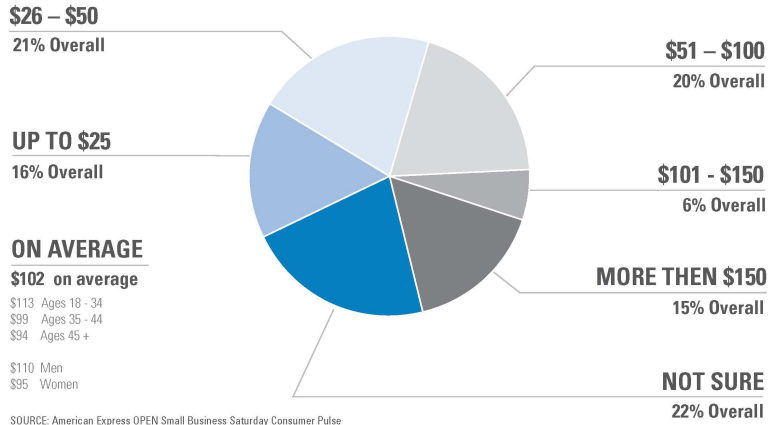


SOURCE: American Express OPEN Small Business Saturday Consumer Pulse



Q. Thinking of ONE small business (locally - owned independent store) you shop at most often: How much do you spend there in a typical month?

CONSUMERS SPEND JUST OVER \$100 (\$102) AT THE ONE SMALL BUSINESS THEY SHOP AT MOST OFTEN IN A TYPICAL MONTH.



SOURCE: American Express OPEN Small Business Saturday Consumer Pulse

America cares about small businesses

With small businesses employing about half of all private sector employees, the majority of Americans are fully aware of the important role small businesses play in the overall U.S. economic health (87%) as well as in local communities (89%) through taxes and jobs.



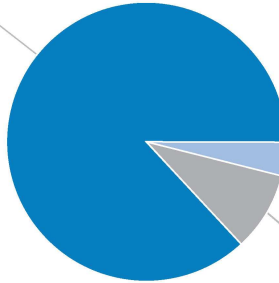
Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
"Small business success is a critical element of overall US economic health."

ALMOST 9 IN 10 PEOPLE (87%) BELIEVE THAT SMALL BUSINESS IS A CRITICAL ELEMENT OF OVERALL U.S. ECONOMIC GROWTH.

AGREE

87% Overall

82% Ages 18 - 34
87% Ages 35 - 44
92% Ages 45 +



DISAGREE

4% Overall

NOT SURE

9% Overall

SOURCE: American Express OPEN Small Business Saturday Consumer Pulse



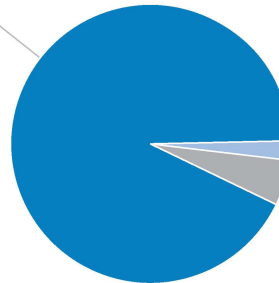
Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
"Small businesses contribute positively to your local community through jobs and taxes."

9 IN 10 AMERICANS BELIEVE THAT SMALL BUSINESSES CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

AGREE

89% Overall

86% Ages 18 - 34
87% Ages 35 - 44
92% Ages 45 +



DISAGREE

2% Overall

NOT SURE

9% Overall

SOURCE: American Express OPEN Small Business Saturday Consumer Pulse

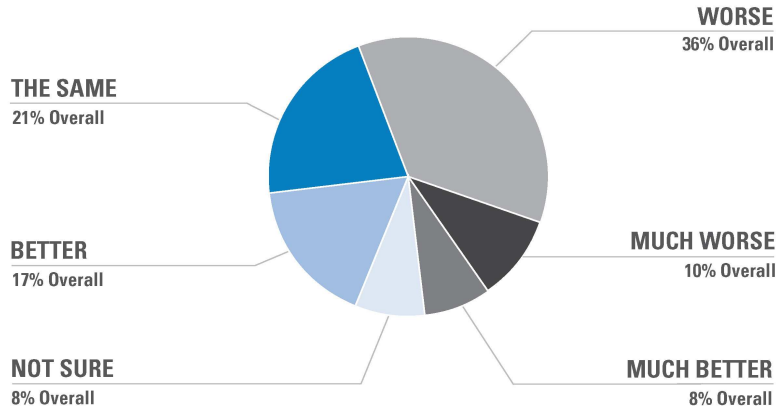
Small business and consumer optimism are down

The recent economic hurdles has sunk small business owners' optimism towards the economy. Yet, business owners are not alone in their pessimism: Almost half of consumers (46%) believe that the strength of the small business economy is worse than five years ago, while 10% believe that it is much worse.



Q. Think of your local community, what's your view of the strength of the small business economy now versus five years ago?

ALMOST HALF OF CONSUMERS (46%) BELIEVE THE STRENGTH OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMY IS WORSE NOW THAN FIVE YEARS AGO.



SOURCE: American Express OPEN Small Business Saturday Consumer Pulse

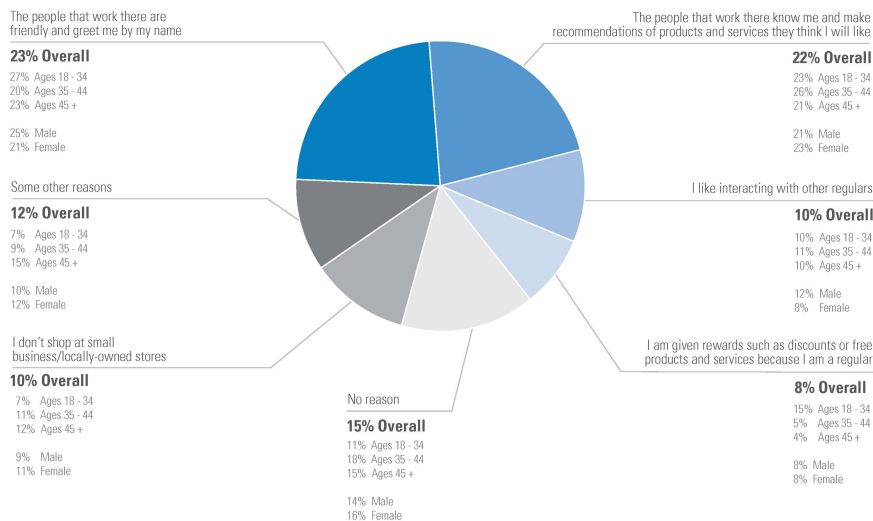
Consumers prefer to shop where everybody knows their name

The personalized and friendly service offered at locally-owned, independent shops attracts consumers to shop small: 23% of respondents believe that the primary reason for them to shop at small businesses is the friendly staff and the way they greet consumers by their name. Meanwhile, 22% responded that the staff's tailored recommendations keep them coming back.



Q. Which of the following is the primary reason you choose to shop at a small business (locally - owned, independent store)?

ALMOST ONE-QUARTER SHOP AT A LOCALLY-OWNED INDEPENDENT SMALL BUSINESS BECAUSE PEOPLE WHO WORK THERE ARE FRIENDLY AND GREET THEM BY NAME.



SOURCE: American Express OPEN Small Business Saturday Consumer Pulse

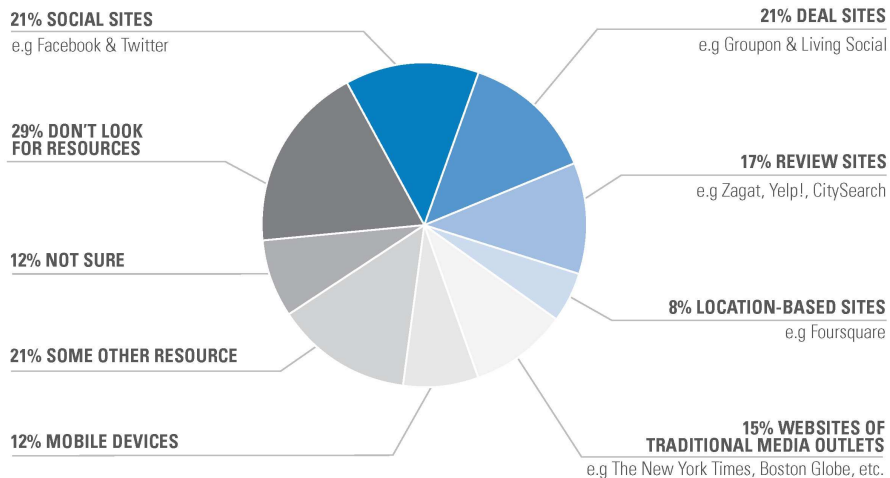
Consumers learn about small businesses via sites like Facebook and Groupon

While consumers learn about the big box deals through national advertising, they find deals from locally-owned small businesses through social sites, such as Facebook and Twitter (21%) and deal sites, including Groupon and Living Social (21%). Other popular resources include review sites (17%), mobile devices (12%), websites of traditional outlets (15%) and location-based sites (8%).



Q. What type of resources do you use to find locally - owned independent stores and/or restaurants in your neighborhood?

DEAL AND SOCIAL SITES ARE THE MOST POPULAR.



SOURCE: American Express OPEN Small Business Saturday Consumer Pulse

Survey Methodology

The American Express OPEN Small Business Saturday Consumer Pulse is based on a nationally representative sample of 1,000 consumers 18 years and older. The anonymous online survey was conducted by Echo Research from July 26 – July 29, 2011. The poll has a margin of error of +/-3.1% at the 95% level of confidence.

###