

NOVEMBER 2020

# SHOP SMALL, SHOP LOCAL: HOW-TO GUIDE

Starting a “Shop Small,  
Shop Local” Campaign

Online Tools for Retailers

Support Small Business  
Storytelling



**COLORADO**  
Department of Local Affairs  
Division of Local Government



*Our small local businesses play a critical part in community economies and revitalization.*

Let this be a motivator for you to provide as much support to those businesses as you can during the rest of 2020, past the holidays, and into 2021. Although Shop Small, Shop Local campaigns need to be adjusted this year, there are many other ways to build up your local businesses. Find inspiration and new ideas to do so in these How-To Guides.

See real-life case studies in the accompanying [The Main Thing](#).

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# "SHOP SMALL, SHOP LOCAL" CAMPAIGN

BASED ON **WOODLAND PARK**



The ongoing pandemic does not mean that a "Shop Small, Shop Local" campaign is not a possibility. You just need to get creative and think differently. Read on for some tips to gather the necessary partners and get a campaign rolling.

## 1

### BUDGET & PARTNERS



At the end of the year, much of your budget may be spoken for. But if there is any money remaining, a Shop Small initiative would be a great way to invest it. Also, reach out to your close partners to see if they would be willing to help fund and organize a campaign to support local businesses.

## 2

### BUILD BUY-IN



When the campaign framework has been established, start talking to some of the local businesses to make sure they are interested in being active participants. If you don't have buy-in from those businesses, it may not be worth pursuing the effort any further. Campaigns like this are not successful if it feels "forced" upon the businesses.

### 3 MAKE SHOPPING FUN & SAFE

When the campaign has the green light, start thinking about what you can organize that will be fun and safe for downtown visitors to partake in. While large gatherings still are not a possibility, perhaps there are activities people can do as family or individually. Could a giveaway or passport program be created to entice shoppers? Are there any other holiday activities already happening that you can piggyback on?



### 4 PROMOTION



Plans are in place and dates are set, now it is time to promote! Create marketing collateral that will stand out to potential customers – this could follow the usual “Shop Small Saturday” branding, or you could create something else you think will resonate with your community. Utilize your communication venues and leverage partners’ distribution channels to spread the word. Any media attention you can get is always helpful too!

### 5 LOOK INTO 2021



Shop Small campaigns usually take place in November and December to promote holiday shopping locally, but our businesses are going to need support into next year, too. Can any of the promotions or initiatives developed now be carried out during the entire winter? Or even be recurring throughout all of 2021?



# ONLINE TOOLS FOR RETAILERS

BASED ON LA JUNTA AND WINDSOR

Shopping habits have been changing over the past few years, and those changes were accelerated when local businesses quickly shut their doors due to the pandemic. Now, Main Street programs can assist businesses by building new online tools for customers or sharing digital strategies for them implement.

## 1

### DETERMINE ROLES



Based on your budget and resources available, determine what capacity your program has to support retailer tools. Does it make sense to focus on education, or can you build something new and robust?

## 2

### UNDERSTAND COMMUNITY NEEDS

Before you get too far in the process, think about your community and their consumption habits. Are your residents comfortable with digital tools, or do they prefer more traditional ways of shopping? Asking these questions will ensure you are building something that community members will actually use.



## 3

### GATHER BUSINESS FEEDBACK

Business owners are busy trying to keep their companies afloat, so your resource needs to be something that will be helpful but not overly complicated or time-consuming on their part. As you start to get plans or ideas in place, run it by a few key business owners to make sure you are on the right track.



# 4



## FIND PARTNERS & SPONSORS

Your tool will truly support local businesses, and a lot of community stakeholders will buy into that goal. Use your network to identify potential sponsors that will help the project. Put together customized pitches for each organization that outlines why this will make a community impact and what the organization can expect in return.

# 5



## BUILD IT!

It is time to make the magic happen! You have brought on people who have skills to build the website, digital toolkit, etc. – they can take the lead to make it real. Meanwhile, stay in constant communication with the participating businesses. They will need to provide as much information as possible so the resource can adequately promote them.



# 6

## PROMOTE AND TRACK



When the digital platform is officially live, make sure you spread the word through social media, local news outlets, newsletters, partner communications, etc. But just because the tool is live does not mean the work is over – continually track the analytics to see how customers interact with it. Based on that data, make updates and adaptations that will benefit everyone.

## BONUS TIP

If your business community is eager for ideas they can implement themselves, consider hosting workshops that will give them tips to expand their digital presence. These could include information about setting up e-commerce on their website, utilizing social media more, and getting acquainted with online review tools such as Google Business and Yelp.

# SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS STORYTELLING

BASED ON **CENTRAL CITY**

Everyone loves a good story, and your local businesses are sure to have compelling ones to share. Telling these stories is just another way to help them gain exposure and grow a loyal fan base. You may have the ability to assist by providing a way to capture those stories through photos, videos, and written content.

## 1

### BUDGET AND CAPACITY PLANNING



As this idea gets rolling, think about the budget and capacity you have to create content. How many businesses can you support on your own? Is this a one-time project, or can it be ongoing as new funding is available? We want to tell as many stories as possible, but sometimes it is best to start small.

## 2

### IDENTIFY THE RESULT



To make sure everyone understands the outcome, find examples of photos and videos you like for inspiration. What is the style of photography? Do the videos include interviews or B-roll footage? If you are working with an outside photographer or videographer, those examples will ensure they deliver what you want.

### 3 ASSEMBLE THE TEAM

It is likely that you do not have all the skills necessary to make these stories consumable – and that is OK! If funds are available, find a photo and video company to capture and produce the footage you want. Or talk to your partners to see if they have those skills to help you out.

### 4 COORDINATE WITH BUSINESSES

Now it is time to find those stories and businesses that want to participate. Start by reaching out to those you know will come across well in this medium. If you can offer this opportunity to everyone, share the information broadly to talk to business owners directly. After the businesses have opted-in and shared the highlights of their stories, the shoots can be scheduled and executed.

### 5 SHARE THE FOOTAGE

After the photo and video stories are delivered, share them on your social media and other marketing platforms, and encourage the featured businesses to do the same. It is also essential to make the footage easily accessible for anyone in the community who wants to use it for promotion. Create a Google Drive, Dropbox folder, Flickr site, or other platform to store and share the files. [See how Central City does it](#)

### 6 DEVELOP WRITTEN STORIES

So far, we have focused on visual storytelling, but you can also translate these stories into written content. Start by creating a form businesses can complete to share their stories – the form could include questions like “Why did you start your business?”, and “What do you love about our community?”. You can easily create a blog or Q&A style article from these answers. [See an example from Fruita](#)

#### BONUS TIP

There is a good chance that there are several businesses with unique, well-known stories that already get a lot of publicity. With your initiative, make it a priority to reach out to places that tend to be in the spotlight less.