

9 or 10 Reasons to Buy Local

Consumers typically make purchase decisions largely based on two factors- price and convenience. It's for this reason that big-box, super discount and chain stores dominate shopping centers and suburban malls throughout the US. It's difficult to deny the significance of price and convenience but should these be the only reasons why we decide what to buy and where? What about the ingredients or contents, the packaging, the manufacturer, the seller and the distance travelled? Many factors deserve consideration when choosing how and where to spend your money. Buying local is one of them- after all, it's your town!

THE ECONOMY

Big-box and super-discount stores plan, design and manage local facilities from a distant headquarters office, using a minimum of local goods and services. Functions such as purchasing, marketing, legal and finance are performed elsewhere. Profits are transferred out of the local area while local businesses struggle or even fail.

Local businesses invest, hire and spend locally. Local ownership minimizes the risk of economic catastrophe due to corporate relocation, restructure, plant shutdown or store closure. Local owners are unlikely to outsource functions outside the local area or move functions offshore.

LOCAL JOB CREATION

Locally owned businesses hire local architects, designers, cabinet shops, sign makers and contractors. Local accountants, insurance brokers, computer consultants, attorneys, advertising agencies and others help run it. Local retailers carry a higher percentage of locally-produced goods resulting in more local jobs.

Providing jobs to your neighbors improves the vitality of your community. For every \$100 spent at a locally owned business, \$45 stays in the local economy, creating jobs and expanding the local tax base. For every \$100 spent at a regional, national or global merchant, only \$14 remains in the community.

NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY

Where we shop, where we eat and where we spend leisure time makes our neighborhood home. One-of-a-kind, independent businesses are integrated within our neighborhoods and are an integral part of what makes our neighborhood a great place to live. Chain stores can alter the unique character of the community. When they do, it's not necessarily for the better.

COMMUNITY VITALITY

Local business owners, typically residents of the community and heavily invested in their businesses, have a substantial interest in the community's long-term health. They rarely threaten to relocate in order to receive tax, zoning, environmental or other regulatory concessions. They frequently serve on local boards and support numerous causes. Studies have shown that they contribute more than twice as much of their revenue to charitable causes as corporate chains. And local business owners are generally much more accessible than executives of large corporations based elsewhere. Studies show that entrepreneurs and skilled workers are more likely to invest and settle in communities that preserve their local businesses and distinctive character.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Local residents place a high value on individuality and consider homegrown independent businesses a source of pride. When asked to name a favorite restaurant, cafe, or shop, it's typically a unique local business. Communities that preserve and support their unique, one-of-a-kind businesses and distinctive character are more likely to attract entrepreneurs and new investment, new residents and visitors.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Local business owners establish offices and retail stores downtown and in walkable neighborhood locations. Having a broad array of businesses within walking or biking distance reduces the need to drive and helps to conserve land, limit sprawl and lessen traffic and air pollution.

Great amounts of fossil fuel are consumed to transport goods from distant, even international locations. Fossil fuel combustion releases carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, particulate matter and other pollutants into the atmosphere, contributing to global climate change, acid rain, and smog and air pollution.

TAXES

Local, independent businesses require less public infrastructure and make more efficient use of municipal services. Big-box stores and shopping centers are far more costly in terms of roads, utilities, police and fire and sanitation services.

CHOICES

As fewer and fewer corporations dominate production and sales, product options are reduced. Local merchants select from competing goods and services to find those appealing to their customers. Choosing products based on what their local customers need and desire, not a national sales plan, guarantees a more diverse range of product and service choices.

KNOWLEDGE & EXPERTISE

Local business owners and employees take special pride in their products and services. They often possess a superior level of expertise and passion for their products and they tend to have a greater interest in getting to know their customers. They are also likely to provide superior customer service.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship is the cornerstone of our economic innovation and prosperity. The successes of locally owned, independent businesses provides opportunity and inspiration to young people, proving that they can live, work and prosper locally on their own terms.