

2019 Cox Consumer Pulse on Small Businesses

A survey of more than 1,000 American consumers explores their support of local small to mid-sized businesses and shares their sentiments on what factors would increase their willingness to shop and dine small.

What About Main Street?

Sixty-nine percent of surveyed consumers feel that the U.S. government isn't doing enough to promote small business growth on a national level.



The top ways they feel the government can support small business growth is to offer more tax incentives and support programs for veteran-, minority- and women-owned businesses.

Live Love Local

Almost **three-quarters** of respondents shop small to support their local community; here are a few more reasons shoppers love their home-grown spots:



54% The convenience



53% Greater customer service than a large business



38% Loyalty



35% Greater level of trust than a large business



33% Familiarity

Proud Americans (and Activists)

"Made in America" means something to today's shoppers. Over **70** percent of surveyed consumers would spend more money at small businesses that sold exclusively American-made goods vs. overseas imports.

A growing number (up to **71** percent from **68** percent in 2018) think small business owners should openly promote the causes they support and are willing to spend more for that reason as well (**70** percent).

Just over half of respondents would stop supporting a small business if the causes they support didn't line up with the consumer's views.



Diversity & Inclusion, Consumers Care



Just as many consumers are becoming more educated on where their goods come from, they're also interested in how companies are running their businesses.

Similar to last year, around **72** percent of respondents said it is important to them that the small businesses they frequent practice diverse and inclusive hiring.

Serving Up Good Service

Customer service is a huge priority for small business owners, and rightfully so. But how are stores performing among today's consumers? Take a look at the top four types of businesses getting the "above average" seal of approval:



41% Restaurants



41% Food and beverage stores (i.e. grocery and convenience)



40% Miscellaneous retailers (i.e. florists, pet supplies, novelty shops)

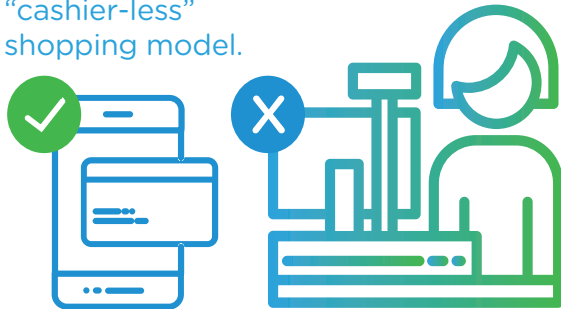


37% Building materials/supplies dealers (i.e. hardware stores, nurseries and garden centers)

Ready. Set. Amazon Go.

Is Amazon's famed two-day shipping going to end shopping local? Not according to this year's respondents. Though **71** percent think Amazon hurts small businesses, over half of respondents (**53** percent) say that they don't shop less at small businesses because of the retail giant.

But that doesn't mean it isn't doing something right. A rising number (**45** percent from **37** percent in 2018) of millennial respondents ages 18 to 29 think small businesses should take a note from Amazon and adopt a "cashier-less" shopping model.



We All Cheer for Wi-Fi

Today's consumers are all about connectivity, even when it comes to their brick-and-mortars.

For the fourth year in a row, U.S. small business shoppers touted Wi-Fi as the top technology that would enhance the customer experience at their favorite small businesses, followed by mobile-friendly POS systems and email/online product recommendations.



40%

Free and reliable Wi-Fi (41% in 2018)



21%

Point-of-Sale (POS) that accepts mobile payments (18% in 2018)



14%

Email or online product recommendations based on past purchases (22% in 2018)

Do @ Me

Of the 47 percent of surveyed consumers that receive regular tech-driven outreach from small businesses, respondents reported that their favorite local shops are increasingly using social media to interact with and market to them.



68%
Email

(same as 2018)



66%
Facebook

(50% in 2018)



33%
Instagram

(20% in 2018)



31%
Text

(32% in 2018)

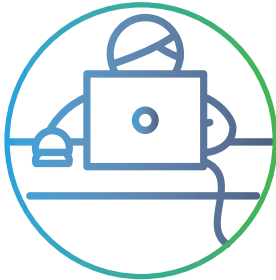


20%
Twitter

(8% 2018)

Posted, Liked, Delivered

Overall respondents felt small businesses should increase email (**60** percent), social media marketing (**38** percent) and in-person events (**38** percent) to improve engagement with customers.



Though younger consumers preferred Facebook, those surveyed ages 45 and older were much more interested in receiving emails.

About the 2019 Cox Business Consumer Sentiment Survey on Small Business

Cox Business commissioned a blind survey of American consumers in April of 2019. Respondents to the online survey included a total of 1,036 consumers. The margin of error for this survey is plus or minus 3 percent.

Start Them Early

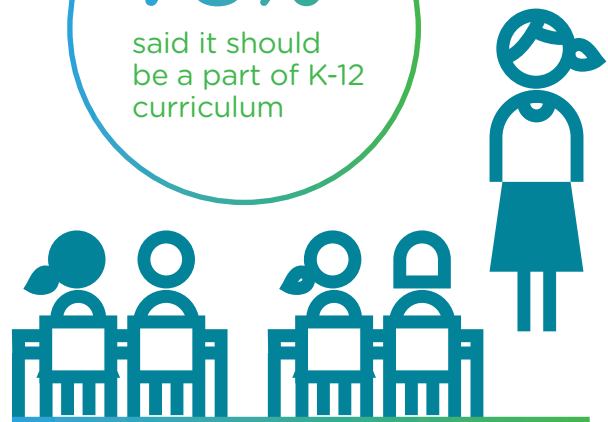
While business courses are nothing new to colleges and universities, many primary education curriculums don't include entrepreneurship.

However, most consumers surveyed are in full support of adding entrepreneurship to K-12 lesson plans.



78%

said it should be a part of K-12 curriculum



About Cox Business

The commercial division of Cox Communications, Cox Business provides voice, data and video services for more than 355,000 small and regional businesses nationwide, including health care providers; K-12 and higher education; financial institutions; and federal, state and local government organizations. The organization also serves most of the top-tier wireless and wireline telecommunications carriers in the U.S. through its wholesale division.