

Small Business Season Checklist



Are you participating in Small Business Saturday—or better yet—Small Business Season, where you encourage people to shop small throughout the holiday and not just on the day after Black Friday? If so, you might be scrambling right now trying to put together last-minute touches on what you hope will be a hot time of year for your business.

If you're wondering how you should spend your hours leading up to Small Business Saturday and what you need for the biggest shopping season of the year, we have a checklist to help.

[Small Business Season Checklist](#)

Here are the things you should have (or do) for your small business going into this busy holiday season:

- An offer.** This is the first thing you'll notice about any Black Friday ad. You don't need a loss leader to get people in the door like the box stores use. It could be something small, or needed, like free gift wrapping, "special discounts" or a bonus surprise. Providing a discount offer appeals to the frugal among us but any bonus makes a customer feel special.
- Beautiful décor visible from the sidewalk or street.** Curb appeal brings people in even when they know very little about your business.
- Space.** Being in a cluttered business makes some people feel claustrophobic, especially when you add in a lot of shoppers. Clear things out so customers will linger and buy more. A clear space also makes it easier for people to find what they're looking for.

Cluttered spaces are overwhelming. If clutter is not a concern, make sure your hottest items are clearly visible.

- Good signage.** Ever walk past a business and wonder if they're open? That's never good for sales. Make sure your signage is clear when it comes to your hours, whether you're open, and what you sell. If your city allows it, you may want to consider a sandwich board or salesperson outside for greater clarity.
- Staff.** If you're increasing your marketing, you'll likely bring in more customers as well. Make sure you have enough staff to give customers a great experience. It's easy to send employees home if they're unneeded. It's much harder to bring them in when there's a crowd.
- Website.** Don't forget your website. Some people will choose to shop online on Small Business Saturday and throughout the Small Business Season. Make sure they can find what they need. Your website (and social media profiles) is also the perfect place to post availability updates on items that sell out quickly.
- A social media posting strategy.** If you are posting to social media for business purposes, you should have a strategy and a schedule. Look at your most popular posts from the past. What gets the most engagement? What type of media? Consider incorporating video if you haven't done so already. Video can bring a lot of excitement to your business, especially when you stream live events. Speaking of...
- An Event.** In-person shoppers love the experience. You can cater to that by creating a special event for them. This could be a contest, a class, a station for kids to play while their adult shops, or even a visit from the big guy himself—Santa.
- Return visit discounts.** It's easier to sell to someone who has already purchased from you. If you want to move beyond Small Business Saturday into Small Business Season, giving customers a coupon to be used on a future purchase is a good way to do this.
- Chamber awareness.** Make sure you're plugged into the festivities your chamber is hosting. They have a large, well-respected voice and can help you bring in even more customers this season.