

What If There Were No Small Businesses?

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The first week of May is [National Small Business Week](#) — a time to recognize the small businesses that fuel this nation, and the people who make them go.


As champions of small business, we at [Constant Contact](#) always love an excuse to celebrate their successes. We also feel a responsibility to shine a light on any consumer trends that may help our customers improve the ways they communicate with the people they serve.

For this year's National Small Business Week, we wanted to go further in our recognition of the small businesses in our lives.

Saying “thank you” is nice, but to truly celebrate their impact, we knew we needed to understand the many ways Americans interact with the small businesses around them — and how different our routines and communities would be if they did not exist.

“A World Without Small Businesses” is a new report from Constant Contact in which we polled over 2,500 consumers from all across America, asking them about how, when, and why they engage with small businesses today. That enabled us to get a clear picture of how well consumers understand small businesses, the ones they support on a regular basis and how they color our cities and towns.

With that knowledge, it was immediately clear to us just how valuable small businesses are in America — spoiler alert, we couldn't live without them!

During a typical week, over 90 percent of Americans interact with a small business, and more than half visit at least three of them. 

Small businesses power our lives, make us feel good, and help us find what we're looking for


When it comes to how prevalent small businesses are in our routines, the answer is clear.

During a typical week, over 90 percent of Americans interact with a small business, and more than half visit at least three of them.

This underscores something we've known for a long time — small businesses are everywhere. They connect and feed our communities, take care of our children, provide entertainment and keep us healthy. Whether you realize it or not, small businesses have a big influence on your life.

Small businesses also have a superpower that's unique to them.

Think about the last time you purchased something from a small business — there's a good chance you walked away feeling positive about either yourself, the business or the experience.


Doing business today is about establishing emotional connections. 

It doesn't come as a surprise to see that other consumers agree. According to our research, Americans said supporting small businesses makes them feel helpful, connected and involved.

It's difficult to establish that type of emotional connection with a larger business, which is probably why 71 percent of respondents told us they prefer the experience a small business provides.

Small businesses give our communities their unique flavor

Downtown, U.S.A. looks a little different today than it did just a few years ago (thanks, COVID), but that hasn't stopped consumers from supporting local businesses.

It's small businesses that give our downtowns personality. 


In fact, it's small businesses that give our downtowns personality, and consumers recognize that. Of those we polled, up to one-third of individuals who live in a city said they would consider moving to a new area if all the small businesses in their downtown closed.

So, what does the typical American downtown look like?

You can almost always find at least one restaurant, bakery/coffee shop, salon or beauty shop, convenience store and franchise business. Notably, this list also reflects many of the small businesses people said they absolutely can't live without. Americans crave the convenience, familiarity and personalized customer service that small businesses provide.

This illustrates not only how tightly small businesses are integrated into our downtowns, but how different those areas would look if they did not exist.

Imagine if your nearest downtown area didn't have any of the doctor's offices, art galleries or yoga studios that add to its charm. Those businesses might fly under the radar sometimes, but without them, every town would feel just the same as the next.


Americans crave the convenience, familiarity and personalized customer service that small businesses provide. 

Without education, some small businesses remain overlooked

Our findings show the value small businesses provide, but we also learned that many Americans have some degree of "small business blindness." While their desire to support small businesses

is strong, they have difficulty recognizing some of the less obvious small businesses they depend on every day.

We discovered that before being provided the definition of a small business, less than half of consumers realized artists and performers, convenience stores, business/financial consultants, real estate agents, gyms, doctors and franchises are all small businesses. Indicative of their confusion, about half of respondents also felt small businesses closing would cause little to no disruption in their lives.

Many Americans have some degree of “small business blindness.” 

The reality is that **we take for granted what these unsung heroes provide to our communities** — sometimes we don’t even realize how much more difficult basic things would be if they did not exist.

Once consumers realized how many of the businesses around them are considered small businesses, they began to appreciate their value even more. For example, despite not realizing they were small businesses at first, consumers ultimately felt doctors contribute the most to our communities.

Celebrating Small Businesses

Small businesses are the lifeblood of this country.

[According to the Small Business Administration](#), they employ about half of the private workforce in the United States, and they deserve much of the credit for cultivating the uniqueness of our cities and towns.

As we enjoy another National Small Business Week, let’s do more than just thank these business leaders for their efforts. Let’s [celebrate them](#)!

After all, a world without small businesses wouldn’t be a fun or productive place for anyone to live. So, let’s show small businesses just how essential they are to our lifestyles and our communities.

Frequent their shops. Thank them for all they do. And most importantly, support your local small businesses by always shopping small — first.

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