

2025-2026

FREE

Your Guide **to Local Businesses** **in Central Vermont**

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Shopping for Services

These days, few of us have enough time to get everything done. Next time you have a gift-giving occasion, consider giving the gift of time by shopping for local services.

Births, graduations, birthdays, Mother's Day or Father's Day, house warmings, any gift-giving events are all great occasions to give a gift of time.

Home Care

Look for local services to help people take care of their home, inside and out. This can include yard cleaning and mowing, power washing, pool services, mobile car washes, tree services, house cleaning, pet sitting and more. If you're shopping in your own area, start by asking friends and family their favorite services to use. You can also consult

social media or search recommendation websites.

Prepay Accounts

If your intended gift recipient has a regular service they use, such as pest control or yard services, call and see if you can prepay for their next service. This takes the guesswork out of what services they find most useful and puts time and money back in their pocket. Find out what services they use by asking their recommendations for companies in the area.

Meals, Food and More

Everyone has to eat and appreciates a good meal they didn't have to cook. Look into meal deliveries from their favorite restaurants or gift certificates so they can use it at their leisure. If you can, include

money for a tip as well, especially if you're having the food delivered.

Grocery delivery is also a great idea. Choose a service such as Instacart or Uber Eats and pick out some staples or easy-to-prepare meals. Some local grocery chains may offer delivery themselves as well. Again, make sure to tip your shopper and delivery driver.

Experiences

Delivering a great time is just a few clicks away. Consider purchasing classes or passes to a local attraction. Memberships are also a great idea that may provide discounts on other types of purchases as well. For instance, a zoo membership may get an entire family in and provide discounts on food and gifts inside the park.

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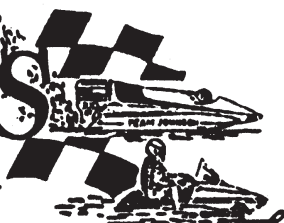
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Shop Locally

Some hidden benefits to shopping local

The economic impact of shopping within one's community is significant. Though estimates vary and are always open to fluctuation, a recent survey from American Express and the National Federation of Independent Business indicated roughly 67 cents out of every dollar spent at a small business remains in the community.

The economic impact of shopping local is plain to see, as many local business owners and employees live in the communities where their companies operate. But there are additional and perhaps less obvious benefits to buying close to home as well.

Walkability

Community residents who aspire to keep their dollars within their own towns may not need to drive to do so. A casual stroll to dinner out on the town can make for a more relaxing evening. By shopping local and supporting businesses within walking distance of their homes, homeowners can help to maintain their local economies and even drive up the value of local real estate.

Time

Another notable but easily overlooked benefit to shopping local is the time savings. Businesses located within one's community are likely a short walk or drive away from home, whereas getting to large chains may require significant travel.

Health

Shopping local also can have a positive impact on consumers' overall health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports there are many notable benefits to social connection, including increased feelings of belonging and being loved and even greater resistance to serious illness and disease.

Patronizing locally owned small businesses has a well-documented positive impact on local economies. A closer look at shopping local reveals there are many lesser known but no less significant advantages to supporting small businesses in one's community.

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Finding a Salon or Spa

Most salons and spas are locally owned and spending on services or gift certificates can have a big effect.

The majority — 70% — of non-franchise salons, spas and barber shops are owner-operated, Salonspa Connection reports, meaning your purchase stays in your community.

Booking an Appointment

Booking an appointment at a new salon can be a daunting experience, and a good stylist who understands your hair and your needs is worth their weight in gold. That's why the initial appointment is so important to your experience.

If you're getting color, a perm or any other complex treatment, consider booking a consultation first. You can get a good idea of the environment at the salon and the stylist's ability, and they get a better idea of your needs and your hair type.

For a spa or nail salon, your first

service should be more simple, for much the same reason. Opt for an initial booking that won't leave a huge impact on you or your wallet in case you aren't satisfied.

If you have a good time, though, make sure to book a follow-up appointment for a more involved treatment later.

Etiquette

Keep in mind proper spa and salon etiquette, especially on your first appointment.

Do:

- Arrive early to allow for check-in, changing and getting a good look at the place.
- Wear appropriate clothing. For spa treatments, consider wearing loose-fitting clothing. Bring open-toed, waterproof sandals if appropriate. Bring swimwear if the spa offers water amenities.
- Silence your phone.

- Speak softly, especially in lounges or waiting areas.
- Respect the privacy of other guests.
- Quickly and quietly communicate your comfort level, preferences or any other concerns to salon or spa staff.
- Follow instructions from staff and respect treatment times.
- Tip appropriately. Usually, tips range from 15-20% of the cost of service.

Don't:

- Wear a lot of jewelry or perfume, especially if you're going to be changing or receiving closed-space services, such as a sauna or steam room.
- Keep medical conditions to yourself, even if it doesn't seem like it's relevant.
- Lie about prior services, such as hair color. Not divulging a box dye or other service can cause a chemical reaction that can be damaging.
- Change your services after arriving. Each service has a particular time reserved for it and your therapist or stylist may have appointments after you.

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Automotive

Daily steps to make a vehicle last longer

Modern cars have longer life expectancies than their predecessors. Consumer Reports indicates it's not unheard of for modern vehicles to endure for 200,000 miles or more. For many, that equates to 12 to 15 years of usage.

Even though many vehicles are built to have increased longevity, it often is up to the driver to do his or her part to ensure cars and trucks can last for years and years. Here are some daily steps vehicle owners can take to achieve longer life spans for their cars or trucks.

Take it slow and steady

Let the car gradually acclimate to being on the move each day after sitting overnight. Gently accelerate and afford the engine time to warm up and all of the components to get the fluids they require before you jump on the highway or require the vehicle to go all out. Most automotive experts warn against idling a car in the driveway to warm it up, but starting out at a slow and steady pace is key.

Don't be extreme

Jerky turns, gunning the gas and braking hard lead to unnecessary wear and tear on a vehicle. By smoothing out your driving, you'll put less stress on mechanical components and help prevent them from wearing out prematurely.

Clean it out daily

Taking a few minutes to clear out trash or to wipe down the

interior each day will prolong the interior components, not to mention make it easier to do a more thorough detailing when the time comes.

Find a trusty fuel station

Bad gas can wreak havoc on a vehicle. Find a station that you trust, particularly one that takes care of their pumps and regularly changes their pump filters. It's worth it to spend a little more overall for good gas.

Read your oil level

Oil is essential to maintain a properly operating engine and vehicle. AARP suggests routine reading of a car's oil level so that you can add lubricant as necessary. While this might not be a daily task, doing it regularly enough means you will keep on top of this important step.

Park in the shade or a garage

The sun may feel good on a warm day, but the UV rays from the sun can take their toll on a vehicle's paint. Whenever possible, park out of direct sunlight so that the paint will not fade and the interior upholstery will not bleach. Those who need to park their vehicles for an extended period of time should choose a clean, dry, well-ventilated location, advises Wawanesa Insurance.

Vehicle owners can take steps each day to improve the longevity of their cars and trucks.

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Shop Local to Help Our Planet

We all play our own unique role in keeping the planet healthy. One perhaps overlooked way is to shop locally. Consider keeping your holiday spending dollars at home this year.

Smaller Footprint

Frequenting local sellers this holiday season gives you the opportunity to enjoy excellent personal service while supporting your community. You'll be reducing your carbon footprint. This concept refers to the environmental impact our activities cause, typically measured by the amount of greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere.

You may think you're doing your part by shopping online. But this popular buying activity actually creates many more unwanted outcomes through the shipping process. Research has shown that people tend to make smaller purchases each time when shopping online, leading to more deliveries and more packaging. Items from a single order might also come from different warehouses, causing more greenhouse gas emissions per item.

What you can do

Buying local products benefits the economy, minimizes fuel consumption and reduces the depletion of natural resources. If you drive less, focusing on nearby local offerings, you're helping save the planet. Those who shop

online should purchase from local businesses that deliver directly from their store. You'll be supporting your own community and reducing the environmental impact of transportation.

Try to buy only food that's in season, as out-of-season produce often needs to be shipped from far away or is grown in greenhouses – and that further contributes to carbon emissions. Track what's in season and consume locally grown options. You'll be reducing the carbon footprint associated with food transportation and supporting sustainable agriculture.

Other key tips

Expand your shopping list and buy more items at the same time to help reduce the number of trips. Instead of driving to the store multiple times for milk, consider buying three gallons once a week. Combine other shopping trips with your grocery store run to minimize fuel consumption. Carpool, if possible, with others who need something from the store.

When shopping, prioritize items that use recycled packaging, as indicated by a recycling symbol. Consider investing in sturdy tote bags made of nylon or cloth when shopping, since this reduces the need for disposable bags. By implementing these small changes, we all can create a more earth-friendly shopping experience.

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Strengthen Your Community

When you focus on shopping locally this holiday season, you help foster a deeper sense of community. This simple act contributes to the betterment and well-being of your town, as you support your neighbors and the local economy.

Local vendors and service providers are an integral part of every business ecosystem. You can contribute to them finishing the sales year on a high note. This, in turn, provides jobs and financial support through wages and taxes, of course, but they're also part of your town's story. These homegrown shops are part of a larger narrative of growth and innovation. Together, they create a sense of place.

Spreading the word

Help spread the word by becoming a local storyteller. Sharing your experiences about shopping local can help grow the small businesses you patronize while empowering others to become more conscientious and better informed. Don't hesitate to tell others about special finds, personalized service and the kind of deep community involvement that helps make your hometown unique.

One study found that these stories are particularly effective in attracting

new customers to businesses owned by members of under-represented communities. Everyone is more apt to shop with businesses that have an intriguing vision or shared mission, in particular during the holidays.

How you can help

Have you had a unique experience at a store? Did you connect with an owner or manager who went above and beyond to cater to your needs? Share it with others. Tell friends, write a letter to local media, post about it on social media, call into a radio show or email the business directly to provide a testimonial in your own words. Don't forget the old saying about a picture conveying a thousand words: Capture and share festive images from your holiday shopping.

These recommendations are more effective if you leave genuine consumer reviews that go beyond a simple thumbs-up. Keep in mind, too, that every experience won't be positive. If you have a negative experience, discuss it with the owner or sales representative in a detailed, honest and fair manner. Reviews go a long way toward guiding others to become local shoppers – so it's crucial that your reviews are presented authentically rather than as an attack.

Did you know?

Conscientious consumers who want to help local entrepreneurs thrive may not need any extra incentive to support small businesses in their communities. However, that doesn't mean it isn't worth noting the tax benefits of buying local compared to buying online or in other towns or cities. Small businesses pay sales taxes to the city and county where the business is located, which means a significant amount of the money spent at local businesses is ultimately going to the community at large. In addition, local businesses tend to hire local residents, who pay taxes on their incomes. Those taxes also benefit the towns and cities where workers live and work. This ripple effect of supporting local businesses is one reason why the Small Business Administration estimates that, for every \$100 consumers spend at a small business, \$48 remains in the community.

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- **51% are between 25 and 54**
- Fifty-five and older readers: 48%

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- More than **77% of The WORLD readers have been to college**
- Nearly 22% hold post-graduate degrees

INCOME

- Nearly **83% live in households generating more than \$50,000 a year**

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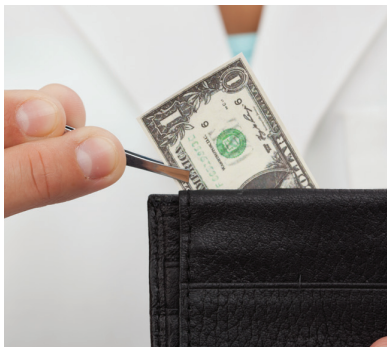
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