Small Business Saturday smashes spend record in sixth year

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The tills ring out for independents as the nation gets behind small business campaign

- An estimated £812 million was spent with small businesses across the UK on the day.
- This was an increase of 8% on Small Business Saturday last year.
- Both #SmallBizSatUK and #SmallBusinessSaturday were in the UK’s top five Twitter trends throughout the day.
- More than 250 small business organisations supported the nationwide initiative, including the Federation of Small Businesses.
- Politicians including the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Mayor of London all publicly supported Small Business Saturday.

Local economies and high streets received a boost last weekend, as shoppers showed support for small businesses, coming out in force for the UK’s sixth annual Small Business Saturday (1 December 2018).

An estimated £812 million was spent in small businesses across the UK on Small Business Saturday, according to research* commissioned by founder and principal supporter American Express. This was up from the £748 million spent on Small Business Saturday last year, with 59% of people aware of the day saying they spent more than usual.

Support for the campaign came from 90% of local councils – a three per cent increase on 2017 – calling for the nation to shop local and support the 5.6 million small businesses across the country.

Positive consumer sentiment and support for small businesses on a local level was echoed through national government, with the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mayor of London all supporting the campaign.

Small Business Saturday also drew high engagement on social media. Tweets sent on the day reached more than 100 million people, with #SmallBizSatUK and #SmallBusinessSaturday trending in the UK’s top 5 throughout the day. Facebook and Instagram posts were also up on 2017, with more people sharing their Small Business Saturday stories.

Michelle Ovens MBE, Director of Small Business Saturday said:
“In its sixth year, Small Business Saturday has once again captured the hearts and minds of the nation, boosting spending with Britain’s small independent businesses. It has been a challenging year for the high street, and so to see the amount spent on Small Business Saturday yet again is fantastic. Year-on-year, small businesses prove their importance to their communities, and consumers up and down the country respond with incredible support for and engagement in this important campaign.”

Charlotte Duerden, UK Country Manager, American Express said:
“Small businesses play such a vital role in our local communities so it’s great to see that the public has once again come out in force to shop small on Small Business Saturday.”
Liz Kemp, founder of Kemps General Store in North Yorkshire, a member of this year’s Small Biz 100 – the top UK small businesses chosen to represent the campaign in 2018 – said:
“Small Business Saturday once again has put a focus on and provided exposure to the small business community. It is so important for us, as a small business, to have this opportunity to share ideas and best practice with one another and create wider support networks.

“As a campaign, it brings what could be disparate businesses together – independents become part of something bigger. It is a chance to show that shopping in a small business is more of an ‘experience’, a destination and something to be enjoyed rather than a functional interaction.

“This experience is something customers clearly appreciate, with the amount spent on Small Business Saturday in its sixth year once again hitting incredible heights. We hope this will be a launchpad for many who do not usually choose to shop local to do so more regularly.”

Caroline Clifton, founder of Brighton gift boutique Present in the Laine, another Small Biz 100 member added:
“Small Business Saturday has once again highlighted how important it is to shop small and shop local. This is vital for so many reasons, not least because it keeps my small business going, but also because it affords me an opportunity to support other small and local businesses – my suppliers. It is a day that draws customers in, which in turn allows small businesses to support one another in this way.

“In six years in the UK, Small Business Saturday has achieved such great things and engaged millions of people with businesses in their local areas. It shows that the high street is still thriving and that small businesses remain at the heart of their communities.”

Small Business Saturday is a grassroots, not-for-profit campaign which was originally founded by American Express in the US in 2010, and the company remains the principal supporter of the campaign in the UK.

Notes to editors

About Small Business Saturday:
Small Business Saturday is a grassroots, not-for-profit campaign.

It was originally founded in the U.S. in 2010 by American Express, which remains the principal supporter of the campaign in the UK as part of its on-going commitment to encourage consumers to shop small. The campaign also benefits from the backing of leading business organisations including the Federation of Small Businesses and Enterprise Nation.

Small Business Saturday takes place on the first Saturday in December each year, but the campaign aims to have a lasting impact on small businesses. In 2018 Small Business Saturday was on Saturday, December 1st.

To learn more, visit smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com

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*About - American Express Research
4,000 UK adults were polled by Toluna between 5pm on Saturday 1 December 2018 and 4pm on Sunday 2 December 2018.

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