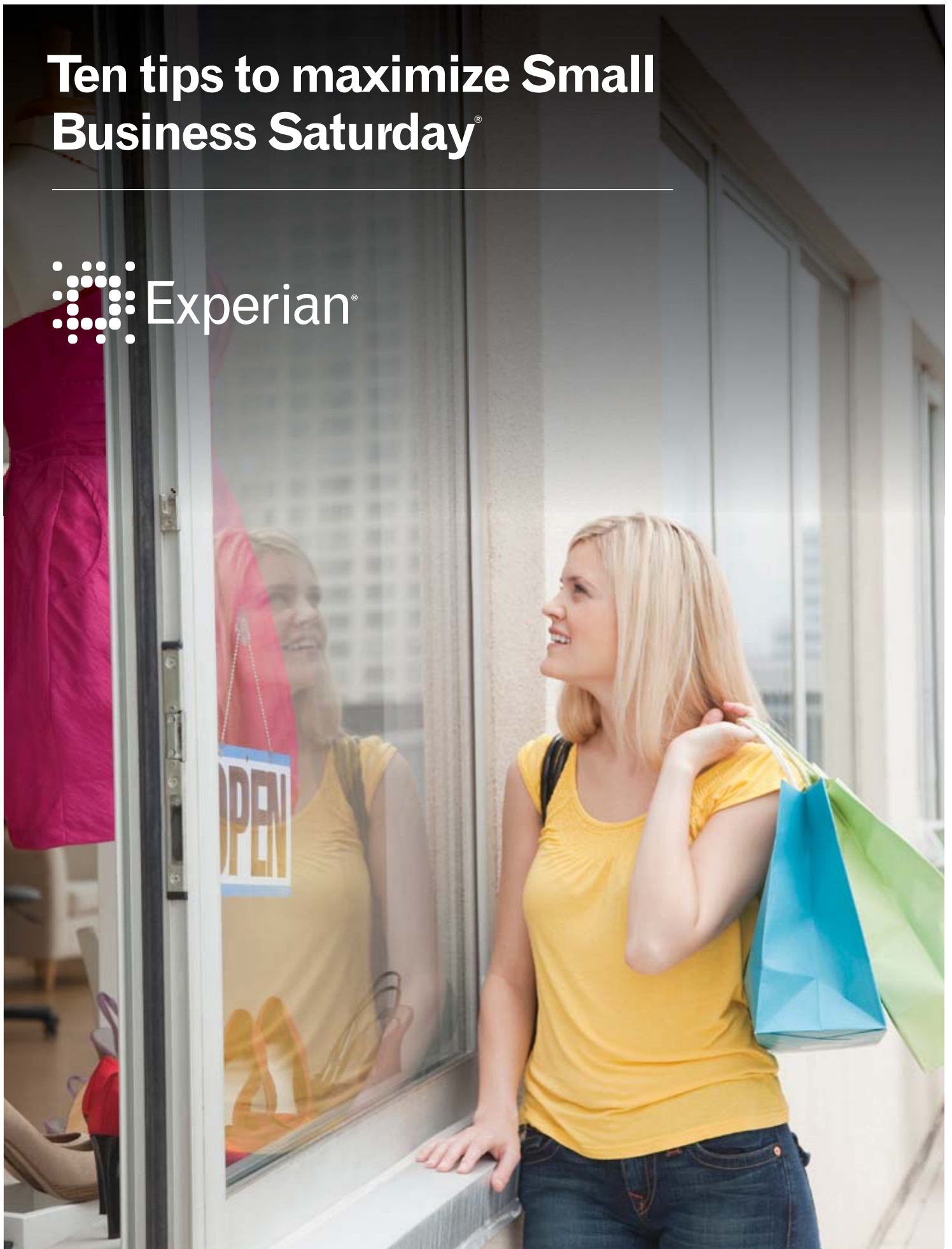


# Ten tips to maximize Small Business Saturday®

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Before you know it, the holiday shopping season will be here again, bringing along lots of opportunities to connect with and get the attention of your target audience. Along with Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Small Business Saturday® provides the opportunity for your business to get more attention as you kick off the holiday shopping season and capture some of the buying momentum often only experienced by large retailers.

Led by American Express, Small Business Saturday got its start in 2010 as a day to celebrate and support small businesses. This nationwide campaign, scheduled this year for Nov. 30, 2013, is a perfect opportunity to send your customers special offers from your business and access innovative marketing and social media tools that will help you connect with your customers and prospects.

One of the best things about Small Business Saturday is that you are not alone. The business community is banding together to encourage consumers to patronize businesses just like yours. That's marketing at a scale you may never have been able to achieve on your own. Many of these businesses are providing resources to help you make the most of this day.

With our 10 tips on the pages that follow, you can maximize your exposure on Small Business Saturday and leverage the national brand campaign while integrating your local market messaging. Take advantage of this unique marketing opportunity, and watch your business grow this holiday season and beyond.



### Tip #1: Understand your customers

What do you really know about your customers? Who is your target audience? Do you know them by their names or where they live? Why do they keep purchasing?

What about the potential customers living around your business? How much do you know about them? Whom among them are most likely to buy from you in the future?

Knowing this information is essential to matching your products and services with the needs of your customers and prospects. Learning more about your customers and the markets in which you operate can help you better position your product, develop targeted messages and execute effective direct-marketing campaigns.

As you begin preparations for Small Business Saturday, take a moment to reflect on what makes your customers unique, what offers they will most likely respond to and where you should target your marketing efforts. There are many ways to gather this information. Ask your customers. See what is trending on Twitter or what your customers are saying on your blog. Look at census information. Gather information from the chamber of commerce.

Experian® also provides an easy-to-use tool to get this information. To help you prepare for Small Business Saturday, we are offering our premium Customer Profiler Report for free. This report will provide detailed information about your customers, their demographic profile and their buying behaviors. We even include marketing tips to help you reach these customers.

Take time now to [review your Customer Profiler Report](#) so you can use this insight as you prepare for Small Business Saturday.

### Tip #2: Find new ideal prospects and create a local following

No matter what kind of business you run, Small Business Saturday and the holidays offer the opportunity to reach a broad audience. Use this time not only to connect with your existing customers through

newsletters or emails, but to try to reach new prospects. Get creative and create targeted marketing for your niche audiences.

To increase your sales during this important time, focus on improving your marketing campaigns with the best possible list of prospects who look like your best customers. With Experian's customer cloning technology, you can drive in more business on Small Business Saturday by concentrating your efforts on finding and targeting more of the right kind of customers for your business.

With that kind of exposure, you'll have more eyes on your Website, more foot traffic through your front door and more money in your registers during this crucial time of year. Who wouldn't want that?

[Start cloning your customers now.](#)

### Tip #3: Take advantage of Small Business Saturday resources

Do you need some help making the most of this day? Check out the Small Business Saturday [Facebook page](#) as well as the [FAQ page](#) for some useful resources and information. On the Website you can find more marketing materials you can customize to get the word out about your business.

There are 26 million small businesses in the United States. Working together can result in strong results. Contact businesses in your area — they may be participating in Small Business Saturday too and want to team up. Check with the Chamber of Commerce to see how it's involved and consider working with another business to provide a promotion. For example, a bike shop and sports apparel store can team up and offer discounts. A bakery and an ice cream shop can help each other advertise and work to make this a successful event.

### Tip#4: Build your customer list

Last year, more than 1.2 million consumers participated in Small Business Saturday. With millions of consumers coming out and participating in Small Business Saturday, involvement is expected only to grow.

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Last year, consumers spent an estimated \$5.5 billion on Small Business Saturday, and it keeps gaining attention. Now is the time to start building your own momentum. A good place to start is with your own customer and prospect list. Use the time leading up to Small Business Saturday to collect customer information through your Website, such as email addresses, product preferences and so on. There are several ways to get customers to join in.

Let customers know now that you are participating in Small Business Saturday. Ask them to join your mailing list so you can keep them informed of the special offers that you will be promoting that day and in the future. Develop a refer-a-friend program that will enable your best customers to help you through word-of-mouth marketing. Make sure you offer an incentive to encourage their participation.

Also, the more information you can gather on your customers, the better you'll be able to meet their future needs. Consider developing a quick survey to find out why they buy your products or services and how you can better meet their needs. Customers, especially at this time of year, are looking for great deals. It's an ideal opportunity to gather names and build your customer file. Once your customers opt in to your mailing list or email list, make sure to continually deliver value. Nurture the relationship and provide exceptional service, and they will stay.

#### **Tip #5: Create a buzz with direct mail**

For some customers, your holiday ads and direct mail will be their first introduction to your business, so you want to make a good impression and inspire them to buy.

The most effective forms of direct mail include some type of offer. To determine the most effective offer, ask yourself, "What do I want to accomplish on Small Business Saturday?" More customers and increased sales are probably the overall objective.

Your offer must be strong enough to make your audience respond, so make sure your direct mail includes:

Use a variety of marketing methods from direct mail to social media to let your customers know you're participating in Small Business Saturday. Keep them up-to-date on the special offers you have for this day and in the future. Develop customer loyalty and refer-a-friend programs to help you with word-of-mouth advertising and gain a strong base of your best customers. Providing an incentive is key to get customers to participate in Small Business Saturday.

- A unique selling proposition that sets you apart from your competition
- Quality design that gives you a professional image
- A clear description of your offer and a call to action that encourages the reader to buy, such as “Shop now! Offer expires November 26”
- A coupon or a discount that encourages new and repeat business as well customer loyalty
- A free gift for signing up for your email list or stopping by your store location

Another increasingly popular marketing tool to consider is creating personalized landing pages, known as pURL. These are unique Web addresses that are designed specifically for your targeted customers. This can help you capture valuable information about your customers as well as promote your company's products and services that are best suited for them.

During this busy time of year, our Personal Marketing Consultant can help you create your Small Business Saturday marketing campaign from start to finish — quickly and affordably. [Get your free consultation today.](#)

#### Tip #6: Segment your customer and prospect file

The more information you know about your current and future customers, the more effective your marketing campaigns will become. Segmenting your customers and prospects based on key demographic attributes will help you become more efficient and develop targeted messages that will stick with those customers.

Quite simply, list segmentation targets your communications and increases the relevancy of your messages, resulting in greater response rates, enhanced customer loyalty and increased sales. Segmenting your list doesn't have to be a daunting task. There are several ways you can divide your lists:

- Prospective customers versus existing customers — This is an important group to segment. By differentiating prospects

from existing customers, you'll avoid the unfortunate mistake of sending an email to existing customers as though they were prospects, offering a better deal than what you've previously extended to your existing client base. This scenario breeds mistrust in your brand, as existing customers will doubt that you view them as unique and valuable. It's a bad move, but you can easily sidestep this sticky situation with proper segmentation.

- Demographics (ZIP Code™/postal code, gender, age, occupation) — Your prospect lives in New York, so why are you sending him specials about flights between Texas and Alaska? Your customer is a 25-year-old woman, so why are you sending her emails with specials on “Fashions for mature women”? You get the idea. Take note of demographics, and your relevant marketing pieces will assure your customers that you are listening (which you are) and will help you achieve the results you desire.
- Behavioral data — Understanding which of your customers prefer to shop online, are fitness enthusiasts or donate to charity will help you make smarter marketing decisions. You can highlight products and features that are most likely to appeal to these customer segments.
- Major clients — Anyone who spends more than \$1,000 at any given time, when others spend less than \$100, should always get special attention. Offer platinum status, free shipping or gifts with their next purchase. These offers let your customers know that you truly appreciate their loyalty.
- Purchasing habits — What type of product they purchased, how much they spent, which store they bought from — these are all great ways to segment. Your next email could be along the lines of “This week only: 25 percent discount on all clothing/baby goods/garden equipment over \$50 at our Portland branch.”
- Prospective customers versus existing customers — Experian provides an easy-to-use online tool to append demographic

and behavioral information to your customer and prospect file. To help you prepare for Small Business Saturday, we are offering a 50 percent discount off our online append services. The data provided by this service can serve as a great start in helping to segment your list in order to develop the right message for the right customers. [Check out our append service here.](#)

#### Tip #7: Build a Small Business Saturday campaign

Maximize your sales potential this Small Business Saturday by creating an organized, multichannel marketing campaign. Consider some of these ideas as you build your campaign:

- Create a complete campaign that leverages different ways to communicate with your customers and extend your reach to new prospects. Sequencing your outreach is critical. You want to be relevant, not annoying. Calendar out all the activities so you can see how many contacts you will be making with your customers.
- Create a unique message for your business that ties into the Small Business Saturday theme but highlights the value you deliver to your customers.
- Don't miss out on the future relationship-building opportunity this campaign creates. Capture contact information from your customers and prospects so you can continue to communicate with them.

Here are some tactical things to consider within your marketing campaign:

- Website customization
  - Add a banner to your Website in support of Small Business Saturday.
  - Add a landing page to your Website where you can feature your special campaign offer. Using coupons is a great way to give value to your Website visitors. Twenty-two percent of U.S. adults say their household uses digital coupons from email or the Internet. Allow your

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The most important thing to consider when using social media is to be authentic. Engage with your customers and followers in a way that feels genuine.

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customers to redeem the coupon either in-store or online on Small Business Saturday.

- Direct-marketing campaigns
  - Create a series of emails to your current customers that tie into Small Business Saturday with special offers and coupons. Send two to three emails regarding the promotion, and if you have a retail location and are looking to generate in-store sales, make sure the last email is sent the day before your event as a reminder.
  - Always include links to your social sites as well as refer-a-friend options in your customer emails.
  - Use direct mail to target prospects and attract new customers to your business. Direct-mail recipients buy 25 percent more items and spend more than nondirect-mail recipients, according to recent data published in a study by the U.S. Postal Service® and *Deliver Magazine*, “How Direct Mail Strengthens Online Sales.” Direct mail is a great way to reach out to prospects and encourage them to begin a dialog with you via future email campaigns. Ensure that you are targeting the right customers with your direct-mail offers. Services like Experian’s Clone My Customer can help with refining your target audience for your direct-mail campaign.
  - Create a personalized URL (pURL), or landing page, for your direct-mail campaign where you can capture email addresses of new prospects. Use a special offer on the landing page to encourage consumers to give you their email addresses.
- Social marketing
  - Add new content to your blog that features the value of shopping local. Tie into the Small Business Saturday national advertising theme to make the most of blog postings.

- Use Twitter and Facebook to promote your Small Business Saturday event. Link your tweets back to your landing page and your special offer. Facebook is a great way to not only get your message out and dialog with your customers, but also give special offers to your fans.

- Event marketing

- Don’t forget to plan out the day of the event. Include messaging on your Website or in your business location that promotes your support of Small Business Saturday.

Capture email addresses from your customers. The best way to capture email is to offer a value, such as a free gift, a special discount or a newsletter subscription. These are all ways to encourage your new customers to give you their contact information.

#### Tip #8: Get social

More than 9 million small businesses have Facebook accounts. Are you one of them?

Word-of-mouth marketing is key to helping small businesses grow. Social media’s dynamic expansion has made this marketing easier on a much larger scale. Now is a great time to establish your Facebook account, if you haven’t already, or update your page with fresh information. Twitter and LinkedIn are other valuable social media sites and can help you build strong connections with your customers.

Of course, it’s not enough just to create your sites; you have to make them work for your business. Include your social media links or addresses throughout your store, on any correspondence with customers, in all marketing materials, even on invoices and account statements.

Optimize your site for “likes,” too. Facebook has boosted the visibility of users’ “likes” by adding thumbnails and metadata from its Open Graph Protocol, meaning that getting a page “liked” on your Website will improve your visibility in newsfeeds. Make sure you



have a like button incorporated throughout your Website — Facebook has a button tool that will let you create and customize the button for your site.

If you have never tweeted before, now is a great time to start. Tweeting can be easy and fun when you talk about what you know best: your business, your industry and your expertise. As you build a list of followers, use hashtags (#) with industry terms to you extend your reach to terms people are following on Twitter. You also can extend your reach by having your tweets posted to your LinkedIn account, thereby adding visibility to your LinkedIn network and offering multiple ways for your customers to engage with you.

Customers really do want to hear from you. The most important thing to consider when using social media is to be authentic. Engage with your customers and followers in a way that feels genuine. You'll build profitable relationships that will last. Also, remember, negative publicity isn't always bad. Sometimes competition and differing opinions can draw new people to check out your Website for themselves — in surprising numbers. Embrace this as an opportunity to get new visibility and get your message seen by potential prospects.

#### **Tip #9: Share your knowledge, content and insights**

Remember, you started your business because you are an expert in what you do. Your customers come to you because they like the service they receive. By using your blog and your social media channels to

ask questions of your customers, provide answers or guidance, and engage in conversations, you'll build credibility for your business and build a loyal customer base.

Here are some ways to tie this content into Small Business Saturday:

- Ask your customers on your Facebook page what local businesses they will be shopping at on Small Business Saturday.
- Post examples of what you like most about working with your customers.
- Share links to other local small-business offers for Small Business Saturday. Encourage the "shop local" theme.

Content is what you know best and why your customers turn to you when they have questions or needs. Small Business Saturday is a great time to ramp up your social marketing and let your expertise shine. Using the opportunity to share your knowledge will help your customers feel informed and establish you as their trusted source for your speciality products and services.

#### **Tip #10: Keep the momentum going**

Like its Black Friday and Cyber Monday predecessors, Small Business Saturday is the kickoff to the holiday shopping season. As you prepare for Small Business Saturday, keep in mind this is just the beginning. Create a plan to keep the momentum going all year long. Here are some things to consider:

- Capture email addresses for your customers and prospects so that you can begin an ongoing dialogue with them.

Create a special Small Business Saturday offer to get them to register with you and provide their email addresses.

- If you don't already have one, create a newsletter that you email to your customers to keep them involved in what's going on in your business. Ask for recommendations on content so the newsletter is as valuable as it can be to your readers.
- Use social media as part of your Small Business Saturday campaign to build a base of followers and fans. Then continue to engage with them throughout the year in the social channels.
- Ask your customers for feedback on your Small Business Saturday campaign. Customers want their voices heard, and they can provide you with suggestions to shape your marketing in the future.
- Create a loyalty program. Small Business Saturday is about building loyalty to local small businesses. Be sure to give your best customers something in return and make them feel special.
- Plan ongoing events and campaigns to reward your customers throughout the year. Include your refer-a-friend messaging in these communications with your customers.
- Find prospects who look like your best customers ([click here](#) to learn more about how to clone your customers) and continually reach out to new segments of your market to grow your business.

Don't let Small Business Saturday be a one-time event. Use our tips to create a plan now on how you will continue to build relationships with these new customers throughout the year.



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