

Local business hubs emphasize importance of ‘community’ in lead-up to Small Business Saturday

By Joshua Weinstein -
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The Selden Market in Downtown Norfolk (Southside Daily photo/Courtesy of Selden Market)

In the frenzy of holiday sales and online shopping, local businesses have positioned themselves at the forefront of shoppers’ minds with [Small Business Saturday](#) — a shopping holiday which promotes buying from small, “brick-and-mortar” stores.

Since its inception in 2010, Small Business Saturday has emerged as an economic response to the [large retailers](#) and [e-commerce businesses](#) represented by Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales — some of the busiest shopping days of the year.

Although Small Business Saturday is meant to highlight shopping at locally-owned, small businesses, the name of the shopping holiday is actually a

registered trademark of [American Express](#), a multinational financial services corporation headquartered in New York City.

At local business hubs like [Selden Market in Downtown Norfolk](#) and the [ViBe Creative District at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront](#), some small businesses are extending sales from Black Friday through Cyber Monday in an attempt to compete, while others are focused on attracting in-person customers on Small Business Saturday.

Local businesses in the ViBe District remain relevant to consumers by straddling both sides.

“This is a neighborhood of creative businesses, many of which offer custom items that do not translate to Black Friday or Cyber Monday type sales,” said Kate Pittman, executive director of ViBe Creative District.

Pittman said she had heard from one ViBe business that will feature online sales for Cyber Monday — [North End Bag Co](#). The business creates custom leather bags and accessories, and split their business operations between a [retail space on 19th Street at the Oceanfront](#) and an online store.

“A select few retailers are participating in multiple sales between Friday and Monday to try appeal to shoppers on whichever day they prefer to shop,” Pittman said.

That approach is mirrored by businesses in Downtown Norfolk’s Selden Market, which rotates in small, local businesses and uses flexible, short-term leasing structures to incubate pop-up shops into established brands.

“A couple of our tenants are featuring Cyber Monday deals, like [Vessel Coffee](#) and [Pure Lagos](#),” said Careyann Weinberg, director of Selden Market. Both stores will be offering substantial discounts and giveaways, in person and online, at points throughout the shopping weekend.

Although some local shops are having sales, Small Business Saturday does not focus as much on discounts and deals like Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

“It’s definitely tied into the big extended shopping weekend — Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, Cyber Monday, and Giving Tuesday,” Weinberg said. “But Small Business Saturday is less about deals and more about supporting your community.”

That emphasis on community is echoed in Virginia Beach, where “the DNA of our small locally-owned-and-operated businesses, many of which do not offer online sales,” has made Small Business Saturday more relevant to the ViBe District than Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Pittman said.

“The advocacy efforts behind Small Business Saturday celebrate our unique businesses and speak to a concentrated effort to support local economies by keeping dollars within your own community versus the major national retailers,” Pittman said.