

Small Business Support Shifts Amid COVID-19 as Consumers and Business Adapt and Evolve

Cox Business research surveys small business health and what consumers expect when getting back to brick-and-mortars

ATLANTA, June 18, 2020 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Today, Cox Business released the results of its annual consumer sentiment survey on small and medium-sized businesses. The results center on the impact that COVID-19 has on SMBs and how consumers expect to interact and support them in the future. Additionally, the survey dives into the specific effects from the pandemic on the healthcare industry.

While people haven't forgotten their favorite small business amid Coronavirus, their visits have dwindled since before the outbreak according to the 2020 Cox Business Consumer Pulse on COVID-19 and Small Businesses. Trips to Main Street were on average 1-3 times per week earlier this year, falling to once weekly (or not at all) in light of stay-at-home orders and social distancing. Luckily, 70 percent of respondents plan to increase support of small businesses as the severity of COVID-19 lessens.

Popular ways to support small businesses during the era of social distancing have included ordering takeout/delivery from local restaurants (76 percent) and increasing the amount tipped at them (40%). Thirty percent of respondents have been shopping online with local retailers to continue support from home.

"It's been an incredibly difficult few months for small businesses across the country," said Steve Rowley, executive vice president of Cox Business. "Knowing that a vast majority of people are looking for ways to show their support makes the outlook brighter."

Sixty-eight percent of respondents want to support small businesses in their community to keep their local economy and jobs afloat – but small businesses can't simply return to business as usual upon re-opening. Consumers said the top things small business owners can do to make them feel safe include:

- Limiting the number of patrons inside at once (79 percent).
- Requiring all staff to wear personal protective equipment (76 percent).
- Installing plastic shields at checkout (45 percent).
- Accepting contactless payment (45 percent).

"The focus of this year's survey looks a bit different from year's past as small businesses and consumers move into uncharted territory," said Rowley. "We're heartened to see that consumers still see local businesses as a priority and have been acting accordingly. Now, it's important for our team and the industry at large to help SMBs approach re-opening."

For more details on the Cox Communications' SMB COVID Impact Tracker and the 2020 Cox Consumer Pulse on COVID-19 and Small Business, visit www.coxblue.com.

About the **2020 Cox Business Consumer Sentiment Survey on Small Business**

Cox Business commissioned a blind survey of American consumers in May of 2020. Respondents to the online survey included a total of 1,244 consumers. The margin of error for this survey is plus or minus 3 percent.

About Cox Business

The commercial division of Cox Communications, Cox Business provides voice, data and video services for more than 355,000 small and regional businesses nationwide, including health care providers; K–12 and higher education; financial institutions; and federal, state and local government organizations. The organization also serves most of the top-tier wireless and wireline telecommunications carriers in the U.S. through its wholesale division. For more information, please visit www.coxbusiness.com.

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For further information: Victor Cooper, Victor.cooper@cox.com, 404-670-0693

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