



# Local Commerce in the Digital Age:

How a local, e-commerce marketplace helps small businesses meet shoppers where they spend time — at home, on the go, and online.

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## Introduction



The pandemic sped up a digital transition that will have lasting impacts on our society. E-commerce has skyrocketed as consumers continue to turn to their devices for purchases. The convenience of e-commerce, combined with this change in consumer behavior since the pandemic, reflects a stronger demand for online shopping. It's imperative that even the smallest businesses in our communities embrace e-commerce.

Yet, as things have opened back up, e-commerce is still an afterthought for many local businesses in our communities. Foot traffic isn't what it used to be and that's not going to change.

This presents an opportunity for local community and economic development organizations to rethink their approach to small business development by incorporating more strategies for digital literacy.

## Shop Local, Online



### Local, E-Commerce Marketplaces Bring Convenience

In general, online shoppers are willing to buy local when provided the opportunity. But, there's just not an easy way to do it online in most places, without combing through tens of hundreds of different websites and checking out many times. It's not convenient and time consuming. As a result, residents tend to default to purchasing products online from other major marketplaces, sending that money out of your local economy.

Shop Local initiatives promoted in communities are very important efforts. However, most of the campaigns still involve trying to get residents to physically go into shops. A larger impact can be reached if shop local initiatives also target local residents that may buy online, bringing in an additional revenue stream for local businesses.

Local e-commerce marketplaces make it possible to facilitate these convenient transactions with local businesses and shoppers.

## The Marketplace Effect

Small businesses are doing everything they can to stay afloat, which includes marketing to bring customers to their doors.

When part of a local e-commerce marketplace, small businesses gain the benefit of network exposure through the marketplace effect.

- Shoppers come to the marketplace for a product, then see products from many other businesses at the same time as they browse.
- As more sellers join the marketplace, word of mouth increases on the new shopping option and the network grows, bringing exposure to even more businesses.

**Being together in one, convenient location gets more small businesses in front of local shoppers where they spend time — at home, on the go, and online.**



*A small business works to fulfill online orders.*

## Keep More Dollars Local

It's hard to ignore the large number of Amazon trucks driving through our streets and increased number of packages sitting on our neighbors doorsteps from products ordered online. Every dollar spent through large marketplace retailers send much of it straight out of our local economies.

A local, e-commerce marketplace helps keep more dollars local by directly supporting small businesses in the community. When dollars are spent locally, they can then be re-spent locally, raising the overall level of economic activity, paying more salaries, and building the local tax base.

## More Fulfillment Options

One benefit of a local e-commerce marketplace is the variety of fulfillment options that can be offered by the businesses, such as local delivery, curbside pickup, local pickup, as well as short-distance shipping.

With less distance to travel, products can often be received quickly by customers that order locally vs. elsewhere.





## Conclusion

Member Marketplace makes it easy to implement a local, e-commerce marketplace for your community. Local shops, service providers, and local makers are all able to benefit from the marketplace model.

- Drive economic growth by giving your community a convenient way to shop local, online
- Help push small businesses into the era of digital commerce
- Integrate existing Shopify and Square websites into the marketplace to easily import and sync inventory
- Support your 'Shop Local' campaigns in a new, innovative way and reach more residents

Our e-commerce marketplace platform seamlessly brings together small businesses, community partners, and customers that care about the community's success.



## About



**Helping vibrant communities create a sense of place online is our passion.**

We empower organizations to unify their businesses online and connect them with customers through one local marketplace.

Our platform is a new tool for business support programs within the era of digital commerce. We offer affordable turnkey solutions to full-scale white-labeled marketplaces depending on your needs. We manage the platform, support and train businesses, and provide customer service to shoppers.

We'd love to chat with you about how to bring a local marketplace to your community!

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